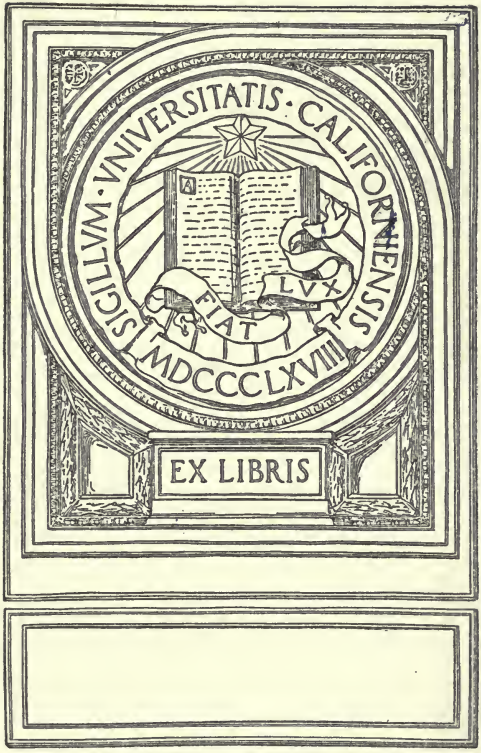
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FATHER SERGIUS

WORKS OF LEO TOLSTOY

Published by Dodd, Mead & Company

Resurrection, a Novel

Hadji Murád, a Novel

Father Sergius and Other Stories

The Forged Coupon and Other Stories

The Man Who Was Dead
(The Living Corpse) Dramas

The Light That Shines in Darkness, a Drama

FATHER SERGIUS

And Other Stories

BY

LEO TOLSTOY

EDITED BY DR. HAGBERG WRIGHT

Frontispiece

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1912

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FATHER SERGIUS

FATHER SERGIUS

I

THERE happened in St. Petersburg during the forties an event which startled society.

A handsome youth, a prince, an officer in the Cuirassiers for whom every one had predicted the rank of aide-de-camp and a brilliant career attached to the person of Emperor Nicholas I., quitted the service. He broke with his beautiful *fiancée,* a lady-in-waiting, and a favourite of the empress, just a fortnight before the wedding-day, and giving his small estate to his sister, retired to a monastery to become a monk.

To those who were ignorant of the hidden motives, this was an extraordinary and unaccountable step; but as regards Prince Stephen Kasatsky himself, it was such a natural move that he could not conceive an alternative.

His father, a retired colonel of the Guards, died when the son was twelve. Although it was hard for his mother to let him go from her, she would not act in defiance of the wishes of her late

husband, who had expressed the desire that in the event of his death the boy should be sent away and educated as a cadet. So she secured his admission to the corps.

The widow herself with her daughter Varvara moved to St. Petersburg in order to be in the same town with the boy and to take him home for his holidays. He showed brilliant capacity and extraordinary ambition, and came out first in military drill, in riding, and in his studies,— mathematics especially — for which he had a particular liking.

In spite of his abnormal height he was a handsome, graceful lad, and had it not been for his violent temper he would have been an altogether exemplary cadet. He never drank or indulged in any sort of dissipation, and he was particularly truthful. The fits of fury which maddened him from time to time, when he lost all control over himself and raged like a wild animal, were the only faults in his character. Once, when a cadet ragged him because of his collection of minerals, he almost threw the boy out of the window. On another occasion he rushed at an officer and struck him, it was said, for having broken his word and told a direct lie.

For this he would surely have been degraded to the rank of a common soldier, if it had not

been for the head of the school, who hushed up the matter and dismissed the officer.

At eighteen Kasatsky left with the rank of lieutenant and entered an aristocratic Guard regiment. The Emperor Nicholas had known him while he was in the cadet corps, and had shown him favour while in the regiment. It was on this account that people prophesied that he would become an aide-de-camp. Kasatsky desired it greatly, although less from ambition than from passionate love for the emperor whom he had cherished since his cadet days. Each time the emperor visited the school — and he visited it very often — as Kasatsky saw the tall figure, the broad chest, the aquiline nose above the moustache, and the close-cropped side whiskers, the military uniform, and the brisk, firm step, and heard him greeting the cadets in his strident voice, he experienced the momentary ecstasy of one who sees his well-beloved. But his passionate adoration of the emperor was even more intense. He desired to give up something, everything, even himself, to show his infinite devotion. The Emperor Nicholas knew that he inspired such admiration, and deliberately provoked it. He played with the cadets, made them surround him, and treated them sometimes with childish simplicity, sometimes as a friend, and then again with an air of solemn grandeur.

After the incident with the officer, the emperor, who did not allude to it, waved Kasatsky theatrically aside when the latter approached him. Then, when he was leaving, he frowned and shook his finger at the boy, saying, "Be assured that everything is known to me; but there are things I do not wish to know. Nevertheless they are *here,*" and he pointed to his heart.

When the cadets were formally received by the emperor on leaving the school, he did not remind Kasatsky of his insubordination, but told them all, as was his custom, that they could turn to him in need, that they were to serve him and their country with loyalty, and that he would ever remain their best friend. All were touched — as usual — and Kasatsky, remembering the past, shed tears and made a vow to serve his beloved Tsar with all his might.

When Kasatsky entered the regiment, his mother and sister left St. Petersburg, going first to Moscow and then to their estate in the country. Kasatsky gave half his fortune to his sister. What remained was quite sufficient to support him in the expensive regiment which he had joined.

Viewed from outside, Kasatsky seemed like an ordinary brilliant young officer of the Guards making a career for himself. But within his soul there were intense and complex strivings.

Although this striving, which had been going on ever since his childhood, seemed to vary in its nature, it was essentially one and the same, and had for its object that absolute perfection in every undertaking which would give him the applause and admiration of the world. Whatever it might be, accomplishments or learning, he worked to merit praise, and to stand as an example to the rest. Mastering one subject he took up another, and so obtained first place in his studies. For example, while he was still in the corps, conscious of a lack of fluency in his French, he contrived to master the language so that he knew it like his own. Then again, when he became interested in chess while still in the corps, he worked at the game till he acquired proficiency.

Apart from the chief end of life, which was in his eyes the service of the Tsar and his country, he had always some self-appointed aim, and, however unimportant it might be, he pursued this with his whole soul, and lived for it until it was accomplished. But the moment it was attained another arose in its place. This passion for distinguishing himself and for pursuing one object in order to distinguish himself filled his life. So it was that after entering upon his career he set himself to acquire the utmost perfection in the knowledge of the service, and, except for his uncon-

trollable temper, which was sometimes the occasion of actions that were inimical to his success, he soon became a model officer.

Once, during a conversation in society, he realised the need of a more general education. So setting himself to work to read books, he soon attained what he desired. Then he wanted to hold a brilliant position in aristocratic society. He learned to dance beautifully, and was presently invited to all the balls and parties in the best circles. But he was not satisfied with this. He was accustomed to being first in everything, and in this instance he was very far from that. Society at that time consisted, as I suppose it has done in every time and place, of four kinds of people — rich people who are received at court; people who are not rich, but are born and brought up in court circles; rich people who ape the court; and people, neither rich nor of the court, who copy both.

Kasatsky did not belong to the first two, but was gladly received in the last two sets. On entering society his first idea was that he must have a *liaison* with a society lady; and quite unexpectedly it soon came about. Presently, however, he realised that the circle in which he moved was not the most exclusive, and that there were higher spheres, and that, notwithstanding he was received there, he was a stranger in their midst.

They were polite to him, but their manner made it plain that they had their own intimates, and that he was not one of them. Kasatsky longed to be one of them. To attain this end he must become an aide-de-camp — which he expected to be — or else he must marry into the set. He resolved upon this latter course. His choice fell upon a young girl, a beauty, belonging to the court, and not merely belonging to the circle he wished to move in, whose society was coveted by the most distinguished and the most firmly rooted in this circle. This was the Countess Korotkova. Kasatsky began to pay court to her purely for the sake of his career; she was uncommonly attractive, and he very soon fell in love with her. She was noticeably cool towards him at first, and then suddenly everything changed. She treated him graciously, and her mother continually invited him to the house.

Kasatsky proposed, and was accepted. He was rather astonished at the facility with which he gained his happiness, and he noticed something strange in the behaviour towards him of both mother and daughter. He was deeply in love, and love had made him blind, so he failed to realise what nearly the whole town knew — that the previous year his *fiancée* had been the favourite of the Emperor Nicholas.

Two weeks before the day arranged for the wedding Kasatsky was at Tsarskoye Selo, at the country place of his *fiancée*. It was a hot day in May. The lovers had had a walk in the garden, and were sitting on a bench in the shade of the lindens. Mary looked exceedingly pretty in her white muslin dress. She seemed the personification of love and innocence — now bending her head, now gazing at her handsome young lover, who was talking to her with great tenderness and self-restraint, as though he feared by look or gesture to offend her angelic purity. Kasatsky belonged to those men of the 'forties, who do not exist nowadays, who deliberately, while condoning impurity in themselves, require in their wives the most ideal and seraphic innocence. Being prepared to find this purity in every girl of their set, they behaved accordingly. This theory, in so far as it concerned the laxity which the men permitted themselves, was certainly altogether wrong and harmful; but in its relation to the women I think, compared with the notion of the modern young man who sees in every girl nothing but a mate or a female, there was much to be said for it. The girls, perceiving such adoration, endeavoured with more or less success to be goddesses.

Kasatsky held the views of his time, and looked

with such eyes upon his sweetheart. That day he was more in love than ever, but there was nothing sensual in his feelings towards his *fiancée*. On the contrary he regarded her with the tender adoration of something unattainable. He rose and stood at his full height before her, leaning with both hands on his sabre.

"Now for the first time I know what happiness is. And it is you — darling — who have given me that happiness," he said, smiling shyly.

He was still at that stage where endearments are not yet a habit, and it made him gasp to think of using them to such an angel.

"It is you who have made me see myself clearly. You have shown me that I am better than I thought," he added.

"I knew it long ago. That is what made me begin to love you."

The nightingales were beginning their song somewhere near, and the young leaves moved in the sudden gusts of wind. He raised her hand to his lips and there were tears in his eyes.

She understood that he was thanking her for having said that she loved him. He took a few steps backwards and forwards, remaining silent, then approached her again, and sat beside her.

"You know, when I began to make love to you, it was not disinterested on my part. I

wanted to get into society. And then, when I came to know you better, how little all that mattered, compared to you! Are you angry with me for that?"

She did not answer, but touched his hand. He understood that it meant "I am not angry."

"Well, you said—" he stopped. It seemed too bold to say what he intended. "You said—that you—began to love me—forgive me—I quite believe it—but there is something that troubles you and stands in the way of your feelings. What is it?"

"Yes—now or never," she thought. "He will know it anyhow. But now he will not forsake me because of it. Oh, if he should, how dreadful!" And she gazed with deep affection upon that tall, noble, powerful figure. She loved him now more than the Tsar, and were it not for Nicholas being an emperor, her choice between them would rest on Kasatsky.

"Listen," she said, "I cannot deceive you. I must tell you everything. You asked me what stood in the way. It is that I have loved before."

She again laid her hand on his with an imploring gesture.

He was silent.

"Do you want to know who it was? The emperor."

"We all loved him. I can imagine you, a school-girl in the institute —"

"No. After that. It was only a passing infatuation, but I must tell you —"

"Well — what?"

"No; it was not simply —" She covered her face with her hands.

"What! You gave yourself to him?"

She was silent.

"His mistress?"

Still she did not answer.

He sprang to his feet, and pale as death, with his teeth chattering, stood before her. He now remembered how the emperor, meeting him on the Nevsky, had congratulated him.

"Oh, my God, what have I done! Stephen!"

"Don't touch me — don't touch me! Oh, how terrible!"

He turned and went to the house.

There he met her mother.

"What's the matter with you, prince?" she stopped, seeing his face. The blood rushed suddenly to his head.

"You knew it! And you wanted me to shield them! Oh, if you weren't a woman —" he

shouted, raising his large fist. Then he turned and ran away.

Had the lover of his *fiancée* been a private individual he would have killed him. But it was his beloved Tsar.

The next day he asked for furlough, and then for his discharge. Feigning illness, he refused to see any one, and went away to the country.

There he spent the summer putting his affairs in order. When summer was over he did not return to St. Petersburg, but entered a monastery with the intention of becoming a monk.

His mother wrote to dissuade him from this momentous step. He answered that he felt a vocation for God which was above all other considerations. It was only his sister, who was as proud and ambitious as himself, who understood him.

She was quite right in her estimate of his motives. His becoming a monk was only to show his contempt for all that seemed most important to the rest of the world, and had seemed so to himself while he was still an officer. He climbed to a pinnacle from which he could look down on those he had previously envied. However, contrary to his sister's opinion, this was not the only guiding motive. Mingled with his pride and his passion for ascendancy, there was also a genuine

religious sentiment which Varvara did not know he possessed. His sense of injury and his disappointment in Mary, whom he had thought such an angel, were so poignant that they led him to despair. His despair led where? To God, to faith, to a childish faith which had never been destroyed.

II

On the feast of the Intercession of the Virgin, Kasatsky entered the monastery to show his superiority over all those who fancied themselves above him.

The abbot was a nobleman by birth, a learned man, and a writer. He belonged to that monastic order which hails from Walachia, the members of which choose, and in their turn are chosen, leaders to be followed unswervingly and implicitly obeyed.

This abbot was the disciple of the famous Ambrosius, disciple of Makardix of the Leonidas, disciple of Païssy Velichkovsky.

To this abbot Kasatsky submitted himself as to the superior of his choice.

Beside the feeling of ascendancy over others, which Kasatsky felt in the monastery as he had felt it in the world, he found here the joy of attaining perfection in the highest degree inwardly as well as outwardly. As in the regiment, he had rejoiced in being more than an irreproachable officer, even exceeding his duties; so as a monk his endeavour was to be perfect, industrious, ab-

stemious, meek, and humble: and, above all, pure, not only in deed but in thought; and obedient. This last quality made his life there far easier. In that much-frequented monastery there were many conditions objectionable to him, but through obedience he became reconciled to them all.

"It is not for me to reason. I have but to obey, whatever the command." On guard before the sacred relics, singing in the choir, or adding up accounts in the hostelry, all possibility of doubt was silenced by obedience to his superior. Had it not been for that, the monotony and length of the church service, the intrusion of visitors and the inferiority of the other monks, would have been extremely distasteful to him. But as it was he bore it all perfectly and found it even a solace and a support.

"I don't know," he thought, "why I ought to hear the same prayers many times a day, but I know that it is necessary, and knowing this I rejoice." His superior had told him that as food is necessary for the life of the body, so is spiritual food, such as prayers in church, necessary for maintaining the life of the spirit. He believed it, and though he found the service for which he had to rise at a very early hour a difficulty, it brought him indubitable comfort and joy.

This was the result of humility and the certainty that anything done in obedience to the superior was right.

The aim of his life was neither the gradual attainment of utter subjugation of his will, nor the attainment of greater and greater humility; but the achievement of all those Christian virtues which seemed in the beginning so easy of possession.

Being not in the least half hearted, he gave what fortune remained to him to the monastery without regret.

Humility before his inferiors, far from being difficult, was a delight to him. Even the victory over the sins of greed and lust were easy for him. The superior had especially warned him against this latter sin, but Kasatsky was glad to feel immunity from it. He was only tortured by the thought of his *fiancée*. It was not only the thought of what had been; but the vivid picture of what might have been. He could not resist recalling to himself the image of the famous mistress of the emperor who afterwards married and became a good wife and mother. Her husband had a high position, influence, and esteem, and a good and penitent wife.

In his better hours Kasatsky was not distressed by this thought. At such times he rejoiced that

these temptations were past. But there were moments when all that went to make up his present life grew dark before his mind; moments when, if he did not actually cease to believe in the foundation of his present life, he was at least unable to perceive it; when he could not discover the object of his present life; when he was overcome with recollections of the past, and terrible to say, with regret at having abandoned the world. His only salvation in that state of mind was obedience and work, and prayers the whole day long. He went through his usual forms at prayers, he even prayed more than was his wont, but it was lip-service, and his soul took no part. This condition would sometimes last a day or two days, and would then pass away. But these days were hideous. Kasatsky felt that he was neither in his own hands nor God's, but subject to some outside will. All he could do at those times was to follow the advice of his superior and undertake nothing, but simply wait.

On the whole, Kasatsky lived then, not according to his own will but in complete obedience to his superior; and in that obedience he found peace.

Such was Kasatsky's life in his first monastery, which lasted seven years. At the end of the third year he was ordained to the priesthood and

was given the name of Sergius. The ordination was a momentous event in his inner life. He had previously experienced great comfort and spiritual uplifting at holy communions. At first, when he was himself celebrating mass, at the moment of the oblation, his soul was filled with exaltation. But gradually this sense became dulled; and when on one occasion he had to celebrate mass in an hour of depression as he sometimes had, he felt that this exaltation could not endure. The emotion eventually paled until only the habit was left.

On the whole, in the seven years of his life in the monastery, Sergius began to grow weary. All that he had to learn, all that he had to attain was done, and he had nothing more to do.

But his stupefaction only increased. During that time he heard of his mother's death and of Mary's marriage. Both events were matters of indifference to him, as all his attention and all his interest were concentrated on his inner life.

In the fourth year of his monastic experience, during which the bishop had shown him marked kindness, his superior told him that in the event of high honours being offered to him he should not decline. Just then monastic ambition, precisely that quality which was so disgusting to him in all the other monks, arose within him. He was sent to a monastery close to the capital. He

would have been glad to refuse, but his superior ordered him to accept, so he obeyed, and taking leave of his superior, left for the other monastery.

This transfer to the monastery near the metropolis was an important event in Sergius's life. There he encountered many temptations, and his whole will power was concentrated on the struggle they entailed. In the first monastery women were no trial to him, but in the second instance this special temptation assumed grave dimensions and even took definite shape.

There was a lady known for her frivolous behaviour, who began to seek his favour. She talked to him and asked him to call upon her. Sergius refused with severity, but was horrified at the definiteness of his desire. He was so alarmed that he wrote to his superior. Moreover, for the sake of humiliation, he called a young novice and, conquering his shame, confessed his weakness. He begged him to keep an eye on him and not let him go anywhere but to service and to do penance.

Besides that, Sergius suffered severely on account of his great antipathy to the abbot of this monastery, a worldly man and clever in worldly ways who was making a career for himself within the church. In spite of his most earnest endeavours, Sergius could not overcome his dislike

for him. He was submissive to him, but in his heart he criticised him unceasingly. At last, when he had been there nearly two years, his real sentiments burst forth.

On the feast of the Intercession of the Virgin, the vesper service was being celebrated in the church proper. There were many visitors from the neighbourhood, and the service was conducted by the abbot himself. Father Sergius was standing in his usual place, and was praying; that is to say, he was engaged in that inner combat which always occupied him during service, especially in this second monastery.

The conflict was caused by his irritation at the presence of all the fine folk and especially the ladies. He tried not to notice what was going on around him. He could not help, however, seeing a soldier who while conducting the better dressed people pushed the common crowd aside, and noticing the ladies who pointed out the monks, often himself and another monk as well, who was noted for his good looks. He tried to concentrate his mind, to see nothing but the light of the candles on the ikonostasis, the sacred images, and the priests. He tried to hear nothing but the prayers which were spoken and chanted; to feel nothing but self-oblivion in the fulfilment of his duty. This was a feeling he always ex-

perienced when he listened to prayers and anticipated the word in the prayers he had so often heard.

So he stood, crossing himself, prostrating himself, struggling with himself, now indulging in quiet condemnation, and now giving himself up to that obliteration of thought and feeling which he voluntarily induced in himself.

When the treasurer, Father Nicodemus (also a great stumbling-block in Father Sergius's way — that Father Nicodemus!), whom he couldn't help censuring for flattering and fawning on the abbot, approached him, and saluting him with a low bow that nearly bent him in two, said that the abbot requested his presence behind the holy gates, Father Sergius straightened his cassock, covered his head, and went circumspectly through the crowd.

"*Lise, regardes á droite — c'est lui,*" he heard a woman's voice say.

"*Où, où? Il n'est pas tellement beau!*"

He knew they were referring to him. As his habit was when he was tempted, he repeated, "Lead us not into temptation." Dropping his eyes and bowing his head, he walked past the lectern and the canons, who at that moment were passing in front of the ikonostasis; and went behind the holy gates by the north portal. Ac-

cording to custom, he crossed himself, bending double before the ikon. Then he raised his head and looked at the abbot, whom, together with some one standing beside him in brilliant array, he had already seen out of the corner of his eye.

The abbot stood against the wall in his vestments, taking his short fat hands from beneath his chasuble and folding them on his fat stomach. Fingering the braid on his chasuble, he smiled as he talked to a man wearing the uniform of a general in the emperor's suite, with insignia and epaulettes, which Father Sergius at once recognised with his experienced military eye. This general was a former colonel in command of his regiment, who now evidently held a very high position. Father Sergius at once noticed that the abbot was fully aware of this, and was so pleased that his fat red face and his bald head gleamed with satisfaction. Father Sergius was grieved and disgusted, and all the more so when he heard from the abbot that he had only sent for him to satisfy the curiosity of the general, who wanted to see his famous "colleague," as he put it.

"I am so glad to see you in your angelic guise," said the general, holding out his hand. "I hope you have not forgotten your old comrade."

The whole thing — the abbot's red and smiling face above his white beard in evident approval of

the general's words; the well-scrubbed face of the general with his self-satisfied smile, the smell of wine from the general's breath, and the smell of cigars from his whiskers — made Sergius boil.

He bowed once more before the abbot, and said, "Your grace deigned to call me—" and he stopped, asking by the very expression of his face and eyes, "What for?"

The abbot said, "Yes, to meet the general."

"Your grace, I left the world to save myself from temptation," he said, pale and with quivering lips; "why, then, do you expose me to it during prayers in the house of God?"

"Go! go!" said the abbot, frowning and growing angry.

Next day Father Sergius asked forgiveness of the abbot and of the brethren for his pride. But at the same time, after a night spent in prayer, he decided that his only possible course was to leave this monastery; so he wrote a letter to his superior imploring him to grant him leave to return to his monastery. He wrote that he felt his weakness and the impossibility of struggling alone against temptation without his help. He did penance for his sin of pride. The next post brought him a letter from the superior, who wrote that the sole cause of all his trouble was pride.

The old man explained to him that his fits of anger were due to the fact that in refusing all clerical honour he humiliated himself not for the sake of God, but for the sake of his pride; merely for the sake of saying to himself: "Now, am I not a splendid fellow not to desire anything?" That was why he could not tolerate the abbot's action. "I have renounced everything for the glory of God, and here I am exhibited like a wild beast!" "If you would just give up vanity for God's glory you would be able to bear it," wrote the old man; "worldly pride is not yet dead in you. I have thought often of you, Sergius, my son. I have prayed also, and this is God's message with regard to you: Go on as you are, and submit."

At that moment tidings came that the recluse Hilary, a man of saintly life, had died in the hermitage. He had lived there for eighteen years. The abbot of that hermitage inquired whether there was not a brother who would take his place.

"Now with regard to that letter of yours," wrote the superior, "go to Father Païssy, of the T—— Monastery. I have written to him about you, and asked him to take you into Hilary's cell. I do not say you could replace Hilary, but you

want solitude to stifle your pride. And may God bless you in your undertaking."

Sergius obeyed his superior, showed his letter to the abbot, and, asking his permission, gave up his cell, handed all his belongings over to the monastery, and departed for the hermitage at T——.

The abbot of that hermitage, a former merchant, received Sergius calmly and quietly, and left him alone in his cell. This cell was a cave dug in a mountain, and Hilary was buried there. In a niche at the back was Hilary's grave, and in front was a place to sleep, a small table, and a shelf with ikons and books. At the entrance door, which could be closed, was another shelf. Upon that shelf food was placed once a day by a brother from the monastery.

So Father Sergius became a hermit.

III

DURING the Carnival in Sergius's second year of seclusion a merry company of rich people, ladies and gentlemen from the neighbouring town, made up a troika party after a meal of carnival pancakes and wine. The company was composed of two lawyers, a wealthy landowner, an officer, and four ladies. One of the ladies was the wife of the officer; another was the wife of the landowner; the third was his sister, a young girl; the fourth was a *divorcée,* beautiful, rich, a little mad, whose ways gave rise to amazement and indignation in the town.

The night was fine; the roads smooth as a floor. They drove ten miles out of town, and then held a consultation as to whether they should turn back or go on.

"But where does this road lead?" asked Madame Makovkin, the beautiful *divorcée.*

"To T——, twelve miles further on," said the lawyer who was having a flirtation with Madame Makovkin.

"And beyond?"

"Then to L——, past the monastery."

"Oh, the one where Father Sergius is?"

"Yes."

"The handsome hermit — Kasatsky."

"Yes."

"Oh — messieurs et mesdames! — let us go in and see Kasatsky. We can rest at T—— and have a bite."

"But we shan't get home to-night?"

"We'll just spend the night at Kasatsky's then."

"Of course. There is a hostelry at the monastery, and a very good one. When I was defending Makine I stopped there."

"No, I shall spend the night at Kasatsky's!"

"Even your great power, dear lady, could not make that possible."

"Not possible? I'll bet you!"

"Good! If you spend the night at Kasatsky's I'll pay you whatever you like."

"*A discrétion!*"

"And you the same, remember."

"Agreed! Let's start."

They gave the driver some wine, and they opened a basket of pies, cakes, and wines for themselves. The ladies drew their white furs round about them. The postillions broke into a dispute as to which should go ahead, and the

younger one, turning sharply round, lifted his whip-handle high up and shouted at the horses; the bells tinkled, and the runners creaked beneath the sledge. The sledge swayed and rocked a little; the outer horses trotted smoothly and briskly, with their tightly-bound tails under the gaily decorated breech-bands. The slippery road faded away rapidly. The driver held the reins tightly.

The lawyer and the officer who sat on the back seat talked nonsense to Madame Makovkin's neighbour, and she herself, huddled in her furs, sat motionless and in thought.

"Eternally the same old things! The ugliness of it. Shiny red faces reeking with liquor and with tobacco, the same words, the same thoughts, for ever the same abomination; and they are all content and satisfied that it should be so, and thus they will go on till they die. But I can't — it bores me. I want something to happen that will upset and shatter the whole thing. We might at least be frozen to death as they were at Saratov. What would these people do? How would they behave? Execrably, I suppose. Everybody would think of nothing but himself, and I no less than the rest. But I have beauty — that's something. They know it. Well — and that monk — I wonder if he really is indifferent to beauty.

No, they all care for it, just like that cadet last autumn. And what a fool he was!"

"Ivan Nicolaievich," she said.

He answered, "Yes?"

"How old is he?"

"Who?"

"Why, Kasatsky."

"Over forty, I should think."

"Does he receive visitors? Does he see everybody?"

"Everybody, yes; but not always."

"Cover up my feet. Not that way — how clumsy you are? Yes, like that. But you needn't squeeze them."

Thus they came to the forest where the cell was.

She stepped out of the sledge and bade them drive on. They tried to dissuade her, but she grew irritable, and commanded them to go on.

Father Sergius was now forty-nine years old. His life in solitude was very hard: not because of fasting and prayers. He endured those easily. But it was the inner struggle which he had not anticipated. There were two reasons for this struggle: his religious doubts and the temptations of desire. He thought these were two different fiends. But they were one and the same. When his doubts were gone lust was gone. But think-

ing these were two different devils, he fought them separately. They, however, always attacked him together.

"O my God, my God," he cried, "why dost Thou not give me faith? There is lust of course, but even St. Anthony and the rest had to fight that; but faith — they had that! There are moments and hours and days when I do not possess it. Why does the world exist with all its charm, if it is sinful and we must renounce it? Why hast Thou created this temptation? Temptation? But isn't this temptation to renounce the joys of the world and to prepare for the life beyond, where there is nothing and where there can be nothing?" Saying this to himself, he became horrified and filled with disgust at himself.

"You vile thing! And you think of being a saint!" he said.

He rose to pray. But when he began praying he saw himself as he appeared at the monastery in his vestments and all his grandeur, and he shook his head.

"No, that is not so. It is a lie. I may deceive all the world, but not myself, and not God. I am insignificant. I am pitiable." And he pushed back the skirts of his cassock, and gazed at his thin legs in their underclothing.

Then he dropped his robe again, and began to

repeat his prayers, making the sign of the cross and prostrating himself.

"Will that couch be my bier?" he read; and, as if a demon whispered to him, he heard: "The solitary couch is also the coffin."

"It is a lie!" and he saw in imagination the shoulders of a widow who had been his mistress. He shook himself and went on reading. After having read the precepts he took up the Gospels. He opened the book at a passage that he had often repeated and knew by heart.

"Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

He stifled the doubts that arose. Just as one replaces an object without disturbing its balance, he carefully put his faith back into its position while it trembled at its base, and stepped back cautiously so as neither to touch it nor upset it. He again pulled himself together and regained his peace of mind and repeating his childish prayer: "O Lord, take me, take me!" felt not only at ease, but glad and thrilled. He crossed himself and lay down to sleep on his narrow bench, putting his light summer garment under his head. He dropped off to sleep at once. In his light slumber he heard small tinkling bells. He did not know whether he was dreaming or waking. But a knock at the door aroused him. He sat up on his couch, not trusting his senses. The knock

came again. Yes, it was nearer, it was at his own door, and after it came the sound of a woman's voice.

"My God! is it true that the devil takes the form of a woman, as I have read in the lives of the saints? Yes — it is a woman's voice! So timid — so sweet — so tender!" And he spat to exorcise the devil. "No! It was only imagination!" and he went to the corner where the lectern stood and fell on his knees, his regular and habitual motion that of itself gave him comfort and pleasure. He bowed low, his hair falling forward on his face, and pressed his bare forehead to the damp, cold floor. There was a draught from the floor. He read a psalm which, as old Father Piman had told him, would ward off the assaults of the devil. His light, slender frame started up upon its strong limbs, and he meant to go on reading his prayers. But he did not read. He involuntarily inclined his head to listen. He wanted to hear more.

All was silent. From the corner of the roof the same regular drops fell into the tub below. Without was a mist, a fog that swallowed up the snow. It was still, very still. There was a sudden rustle at the window, and a distinct voice, the same tender, timid voice, a voice that could only belong to a charming woman.

"Let me in, for Christ's sake."

All the blood rushed to his heart and settled there. He could not even sigh.

"May the Lord appear and his enemies be confounded."

"But I am not the devil!"

He could not hear that the words were spoken by smiling lips. "I am not the devil. I am just a wicked woman that's lost her way, literally and figuratively." (She laughed.) "I am frozen, and I beg for shelter."

He put his face close to the window. The little ikon lamp was reflected in the glass. He put his hands up to his face and peered between them. Fog, mist, darkness, a tree, and — at the right — She herself, a woman in thick white furs, in a fur cap with a lovely, lovely, gentle, frightened face, two inches away, leaning towards him. Their eyes met and they recognised each other — not because they had ever seen each other before. They had never met. But in the look they exchanged they felt — and he particularly — that they knew each other; that they understood.

After that glance which they exchanged how could he entertain any further doubt that this was the devil instead of just a sweet, timid, frightened woman?

"Who are you? Why have you come?" he asked.

"Open the door, I say," she said with a whimsical authority. "I tell you I've lost my way."

"But I am a monk — a hermit."

"Open that door all the same. Do you want me to freeze while you say your prayers?"

"But how —"

"I won't eat you. Let me in for God's sake. I'm quite frozen."

She began to be really frightened and spoke almost tearfully.

He stepped back into the room, looked at the ikon representing the Saviour with His crown of thorns.

"God help me — help me, O God!" he said, crossing himself and bowing low. Then he went to the door which opened into the little porch, and feeling for the latch tried to unhook it. He heard steps outside. She was going from the window to the door.

"Oh!" he heard her exclaim, and he knew she had stepped into a puddle made by the dripping rain. His hands trembled, and he could not move the hook which stuck a little.

"Well, can't you let me in? I'm quite soaked, and I'm frozen. You are only bent on saving your own soul while I freeze to death."

He jerked the door towards him in order to raise the latch, and then, unable to measure his movements, pushed it open with such violence that it struck her.

"Oh — pardon!" he said suddenly, reverting to his former tone with ladies.

She smiled, hearing that "pardon." "Oh, well, he's not so dreadful," she thought. "Never mind; it is you who must pardon me," she said, passing by him. "I would never have ventured, but such an extraordinary circumstance —"

"If you please," he said, making way for her.

He was struck by the fragrance of fine perfume that he had not smelt for many a long day.

She went through the porch into the chamber. He shut the outer door without latching it and passed into the room after her. Not only in his heart but involuntarily moving his lips he repeated unceasingly, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner, have mercy on me, a sinner."

"If you please," he said to her again.

She stood in the middle of the room, dripping, and examined him closely. Her eyes smiled.

"Forgive me for disturbing your solitude," she said, "but you must see what a position I am placed in. It all came about by our coming out for a drive from town. I made a wager that I

would walk by myself from Vorobievka to town. But I lost my way. That's how I happened to find your cell." Her lies now began.

But his face confused her so that she could not proceed, so she stopped. She expected him to be quite different from the man she saw. He was not as handsome as she had imagined, but he was beautiful to her. His grey hair and beard, slightly curling, his fine, regular features and his eyes like burning coals when he looked straight at her, impressed her profoundly. He saw that she was lying.

"Yes; very well," he said, looking at her and dropping his eyes. "Now I will go in there, and this place is at your disposal."

He took the burning lamp down from before the ikon, lit a candle, and making a low bow went out to the little niche on the other side of the partition, and she heard him begin to move something there.

"He is probably trying to shut himself up away from me," she thought, smiling. Taking off her white fur, she tried to remove her cap, but it caught in her hair and in the knitted shawl she was wearing underneath it. She had not got wet at all standing outside at the window. She said so only as a pretext to be admitted. But she had really stepped into a puddle at the door, and her

left foot was wet to the ankle, and one shoe was full of water. She sat down on his bed, a bench only covered with a carpet, and began to take her shoes off. The little cell pleased her. It was about nine feet by twelve, and as clean as glass. There was nothing in it save the bench on which she sat, the book-shelf above it, and the lectern in the corner. On the door were nails where his fur coat and his cassock hung. Beside the lantern was the image of Christ with His crown of thorns, and the lamp. The room smelt strangely of oil and of earth. She liked everything, even that smell. Her wet feet were uncomfortable, the left one especially, and she took off her shoes and stockings, never ceasing to smile. She was happy not only in having achieved her object, but because she perceived that he was troubled by her presence. He, the charming, striking, strange, attractive man!

"Well, if he wasn't responsive, it doesn't matter," she said to herself. "Father Sergius! Father Sergius! — or what am I to call you!"

"What do you want?" answered a low voice.

"Please forgive me for disturbing your solitude, but really I couldn't help it. I would have fallen ill. And even now I don't know if I shan't. I'm quite wet and my feet are like ice."

"Pardon me," answered the quiet voice. "I cannot be of any assistance to you."

"I would not have come if I could have helped it. I shall only stop till dawn."

He did not answer. She heard him muttering something, probably his prayers.

"I hope you will not come in here," she said, smiling, "for I must undress to get dry."

He did not answer, continuing to read his prayers in a steady voice.

"That is a man," she thought, as she attempted to remove her wet shoe. She tugged at it in vain and felt like laughing. Almost inaudibly, she did laugh; then, knowing that he would hear, and would be moved by it just as she wanted him to be, she laughed louder. The kind, cheerful, natural laughter did indeed affect him just as she had wished.

"I could love a man like that. Such eyes; and his simple, noble face, passionate in spite of all the prayers it mutters. There's no fooling us women in that. The instant he put his face against the window-pane and saw me, he knew me and understood me. The glimmer of it was in his eyes and a seal was set upon it for ever. That instant he began to love me and to want me. Yes — he wants me," she said, finally getting off her shoe and fumbling at her stocking.

To remove those long stockings fastened with elastic, she had to raise her skirts. She felt embarrassed and said, "Don't come in." But there was no answer from the other side and she heard the same monotonous murmurs and movements.

"I suppose he's bowing down to the ground," she thought, "but that won't help him. He's thinking about me just as I'm thinking about him. He's thinking about these very feet of mine," she said, taking off the wet stockings and sitting up on the couch barefooted, with her hands clasped about her knees. She sat awhile like this, gazing pensively before her.

"It's a perfect desert here. Nobody would ever know —"

She got down, took her stockings over to the stove and hung them on the damper. It was such a quaint damper! She turned it, and then slipping quietly over to the couch she sat up there again with her feet upon it. There was absolute silence on the other side of the partition. She looked at the little watch hanging round her neck. Two o'clock. "My people will return about three." She had more than an hour before her.

"Well! Am I going to sit here by myself the whole time? Nonsense! I don't like that. I'll call him at once. Father Sergius! Father Sergius! Sergei Dimitrievich! Prince Kasatsky!"

No answer.

"I say! That's cruel. I wouldn't call you if I didn't need you. I'm ill. I don't know what's the matter," she said in a tone of suffering. "Oh! oh!" she groaned, falling back on the couch, and, strange to say, she really felt that she was getting faint, that everything ached, that she was trembling as if with fever.

"Here, listen! Help me! I don't know what's the matter with. Oh! oh!"

She opened her dress, uncovering her breast, and raised her arms, bare to the elbows, above her head. "Oh, oh!"

All this time he stood on the other side of the door and prayed.

Having finished all the evening prayers, he stood motionless, fixing his eyes on the end of his nose, and praying in his heart he repeated with all his soul: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!"

He had heard everything. He had heard how the silk rustled when she took off her dress; how she stepped on the floor with her bare feet. He heard how she rubbed her hands and feet. He felt himself getting weak, and thought he might be lost at any moment. That was why he prayed unceasingly. His feelings must have been somewhat like those of the hero in the fairy tale who

had to go on and on without ever turning back. Sergius heard and felt that the danger was there just above his head, around him, and that the only way to escape it was not to look round on it for an instant. Then suddenly the desire to see her came upon him, and at that very instant she exclaimed, "Now this is monstrous! I may die."

"Yes, I will come. But I will go like that saint who laid one hand upon the adulteress but put the other upon burning coals."

But there were no burning coals. He looked round. The lamp! The lamp!

He put a finger over the flame and frowned, ready to endure. In the beginning it seemed to him that there was no sensation. But then of a sudden, before he had decided whether it hurt him or how much it hurt him, his face writhed, and he jerked his hand away, shaking it in the air.

"No, that I can't do."

"For God's sake, come to me. I am dying. Oh!"

"Must I be lost? No! I'll come to you presently," he said, opening the door. And without looking at her he passed through the room to the porch where he used to chop wood. He felt about to find the block and the axe which were leaning against the wall.

"Presently!" he said, and taking the axe in his right hand, he laid the forefinger of his left hand upon the block. He raised the axe and struck at the finger below the second joint. The finger flew off more lightly than wood, and bounding up, turned over on the edge of the block and then on to the floor. Sergius heard that sound before he realised the pain, but ere he could recover his senses he felt a burning pain and the warmth of the flowing blood. He hastily pressed the end of his cassock to the maimed finger, pressed it to his hip, and going back into her room stood before the woman.

"What do you want?" he asked her in a low voice.

She looked at his pale face with its trembling cheeks and felt ashamed. She jumped up, grasped her fur, and throwing it around her shoulders tucked herself up in it.

"I was in pain — I've taken cold — I — Father Sergius — I —"

He turned his eyes, which were shining with the quiet light of joy upon her, and said,—

"Dear sister, why have you desired to lose your immortal soul? Temptation must come into the world, but woe to him by whom temptation cometh. Pray that God may forgive us both."

She listened and looked at him. Suddenly she

heard the sound of something dripping. She looked closely and saw that blood was dropping from his hand on to his cassock.

"What have you done to your hand?"

She remembered the sound she had heard, and seizing the little ikon lamp ran out to the porch; there on the floor she saw the bloody finger.

She returned with her face paler than his, and wanted to say something. But he went silently to his little apartment and shut the door.

"Forgive me," she said. "How can I atone for my sin?"

"Go."

"Let me bind your wound."

"Go hence."

She dressed hurriedly and silently and sat in her furs waiting.

The sound of little bells reached her from outside.

"Father Sergius, forgive me."

"Go — God will forgive you."

"Father Sergius, I will change my life. Do not forsake me."

"Go."

"Forgive — and bless me!"

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," she heard from behind the door. "Go."

She sobbed and went out from the cell.

The lawyer came forward to meet her.

"Well," he said, "I see I have lost. There's no help for it. Where will you sit?"

"I don't care."

She took a seat in the sledge and did not speak a word till they reached home.

A year later she entered a convent as a novice and led a life of severe discipline under the guidance of hermit R—— who wrote her letters at long intervals.

IV

ANOTHER seven years Father Sergius lived as a hermit. In the beginning he accepted a great part of what people used to bring him — tea, sugar, white bread, milk, clothes, and wood.

But as time went on he led a life of ever greater austerity. Refusing anything that could be thought superfluous, he finally accepted nothing but rye bread once a week. All that was brought to him he gave to the poor who visited him.

His entire time was spent in his cell in prayer or in conversation with visitors whose number continually increased.

Father Sergius appeared in church only three times a year, and when it was necessary he went out to fetch water and wood.

After the episode with Madame Makovkin, the change he effected in her life, and her taking the veil, the fame of Father Sergius increased. Visitors came in greater and greater numbers, and monks came to live in his neighbourhood. A church was built there, and a hostelry. Fame, as usual, exaggerated his feats. People came from

a great distance and began bringing invalids to him in the belief that he could heal them.

His first cure happened in the eighth year of his seclusion. He actually healed a boy of fourteen brought to him by his mother who insisted on Father Sergius putting his hand on the child's head. The idea had never occurred to him that he could heal the sick. He would have regarded such a thought as a great sin of pride.

But the mother who brought the boy never ceased imploring him, on her knees.

"Why wouldn't he help her son when he healed other people?" she asked, and again besought him in the name of Christ.

When Father Sergius replied that only God could heal, she said she wanted him only to lay his hands on his head and pray.

Father Sergius refused and went back to his cell. But next morning — for this happened in the autumn and the nights were already cold — coming out of his cell to fetch water, he saw the same mother with her child, the same boy of fourteen, and heard the same petitions.

Father Sergius remembered the parable of the righteous judge, and contrary to his first instinct that he must indubitably refuse, he began to pray, and prayed until a resolve formed itself in his soul. This decision was that he must accede to

the woman's request, and that her faith was sufficient to save her child. As for him, Father Sergius, he would be in that case but the worthless instrument chosen by God.

Returning to the mother, Father Sergius yielded to her request, put his hand on the boy's head and prayed.

The mother left with her son. In a month the boy was cured, and the fame of the holy healing power of "old Father Sergius," as he was called then, spread abroad. From that time not a week passed without sick people coming to Father Sergius.

Complying with the requests of some, he could not refuse the rest; he laid his hands on them and prayed. Many were healed and his fame became more and more widespread.

Having thus passed seven years in the monastery and many years in the hermitage, he looked now like an old man. He had a long grey beard, and his hair had grown thin.

V

Now Father Sergius had for weeks been haunted by one relentless thought, whether it was right for him to have acquiesced in a state of things not so much created by himself as by the archimandrite and the abbot.

This state of things had begun after the healing of the boy of fourteen. Since that time Sergius felt that each passing month, each week and each day, his inner life had somehow been destroyed and a merely external life had been substituted for it. It was as if he had been turned inside out. Sergius saw that he was a means of attracting visitors and patrons to the monastery, and that, therefore, the authorities of the monastery tried to arrange matters in such a way that he might be most profitable to them. For instance, he had no chance of doing any work. Everything was provided that he could require, and the only thing they asked was that he should not refuse his blessing to the visitors who came to seek it. For his convenience days were appointed on which he should receive them. A reception room was arranged for men; and a place was also enclosed

by railings in order that the crowds of women who came to him should not overwhelm him, a place where he could bestow his blessing upon those who came.

When he was told that he was necessary to men, and that if he would follow the rule of Christ's love, he could not refuse them when they desired to see him, and that his holding aloof from them would be cruel, he could not but agree.

But the more he gave himself up to such an existence the more he felt his inner life transformed into an external one. He felt the fount of living water drying up within him; and that everything he did now was performed more and more for man and less for God. Whatever he did, whether admonishing or simply blessing, or praying for the sick, or giving advice on the conduct of life, or listening to expressions of gratitude from those he had helped, or healed (as they say) or instructed or advised, he could not help feeling a certain pleasure when they expressed their gratitude to him. Neither could he be indifferent to the results of his activity, nor to his influence. He now thought himself a shining light. But the more he harboured that idea, the more he was conscious of the fact that the divine light of truth which had previously burned within him was flickering and dying.

"How much of what I do is done for God and how much for man?" That was the question that tormented him. Not that he could not find an answer to it, but he dared not give an answer. He felt deep down in his soul that the devil had somehow changed all his work for God into work for man. Because just as it had formerly been hard for him to be torn from solitude, now solitude itself was hard. He was often wearied with visitors, but in the bottom of his heart he enjoyed their presence and rejoiced in the praise which was heaped on him.

There came a time when he made up his mind to go away, to hide. He even thought out a plan. He got ready a peasant shirt and peasant trousers, a coat and a cap. He explained that he wanted them to give to the poor, and he kept these clothes in his cell, thinking how he would one day put them on and cut his hair, and go away. First he would take a train and travel for about three hundred miles. Then he would get out and walk from village to village. He asked an old soldier how he tramped; if people gave alms, and whether they admitted wayfarers into their houses. The soldier told him where people were most charitable, and where they would take a wanderer in for the night, and Father Sergius decided to act on his advice. One night, he

even put on those clothes and was about to go. But he did not know which was best, to remain or to run away. For a time he was undecided. Then the state of indecision passed. He grew accustomed to the devil and yielded to him; and the peasant clothes only served to remind him of thoughts and feelings that were no more.

Crowds flocked to him increasingly from day to day, and he had less and less time for prayers and for renewing his spiritual strength. Sometimes, in his brighter moments, he thought he was like a place where a brook had once been. There had been a quiet stream of living water which flowed out of him and through him, he thought. That had been real life, the time when she had tempted him. He always thought with ecstasy of that night and of her who was now Mother Agnes. She had tasted of that pure water. Since then the water had hardly been given time to collect before those who were thirsty arrived in crowds, pushing one another aside, and they had trodden down the little brook until nothing but mud was left. So he thought in his clearer moments; but his ordinary state of mind was weariness and a sort of tenderness for himself because of that weariness.

It was spring, the eve of a festal day. Father Sergius celebrated Vespers in the church in the

cave. There were as many people as the place could hold — about twenty altogether. They all belonged to the better classes, rich merchants and such like. Father Sergius admitted every one to his church, but a selection was made by the monk appointed to serve him and by a man on duty who was sent to the hermitage every day from the monastery. A crowd of about eighty pilgrims, chiefly women, stood outside, waiting for Father Sergius to come out and bless them. In that part of the service, when he went to the tomb of his predecessor to bless it, he felt faint, and staggered, and would have fallen had it not been for a merchant who served as deacon who caught him.

"What is the matter with you? Father Sergius, dear Father Sergius! O God!" exclaimed a woman's voice. "He is as white as a sheet!"

But Father Sergius pulled himself together and though still very pale, pushed aside the deacon and the merchant and resumed the prayers. Father Serafian, the deacon, and the acolytes and a lady, Sophia Ivanovna, who always lived close by the hermitage to attend on Father Sergius, begged him to bring the service to an end.

"No, there's nothing the matter," said Father Sergius, faintly smiling from beneath his mous-

tache and continuing his prayers. "Ah, that is the way of saints," he thought.

"A holy man — an angel of God," he heard Sophia Ivanovna and the merchant who had supported him a moment before murmur. He did not heed their entreaties, but went on with the service. Crowding one another as before, they all filed through narrow passages back into the little church where Father Sergius completed vespers, merely curtailing the service a little. Directly after this, having pronounced the benediction on those present, he sat down outside on a little bench beneath an elm tree at the entrance to the cave. He wanted to rest; to breathe fresh air. He felt the need of it; but the moment he appeared, a crowd of people rushed to him soliciting his blessing, his advice, and his help. In the crowd was a number of women, pilgrims going from one holy place to another, from one holy man to another, ever in ecstasy before each sanctuary and before each saint.

Father Sergius knew this common, cold, irreligious, unemotional type. As for the men in the crowd, they were for the most part retired soldiers, long unaccustomed to a settled life, and most of them were poor, drunken old men who tramped from monastery to monastery merely for a living. The dull peasantry also flocked there,

men and women, with their selfish requirements seeking healing or advice in their little daily interests; how their daughters should be married, or a shop hired, or land bought, or how a woman could atone for a child she had lain over in sleep and killed, or for a child she had borne out of wedlock.

All this was an old story to Father Sergius and did not interest him. He knew he would hear nothing new from them. The spectacle of their faces could not arouse any religious emotion in him. But he liked to look at them as a crowd which was in need of his benediction and revered his words. This made him like the crowd, although he found them fatiguing and tiresome.

Father Serafian began to disperse the people saying that Father Sergius was weary. But Father Sergius recollected the words of the Gospel, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not," and touched at his recollection of the passage he permitted them to approach. He rose, walked to the little railing beyond which the crowd had gathered, and began to bless them, but his answers to their questions were so faint that he was moved at hearing himself.

Despite his wish to receive them all, it was too much for him. Everything grew dark again before his eyes, and he staggered and grasped the

railings. He felt the blood rushing to his head, and grew pale and then scarlet.

"I must leave the rest till to-morrow, I can do no more now," he said, and pronouncing a general benediction, returned to the bench.

The merchant supported him again, and taking him by the arm assisted him to be seated. Voices exclaimed in the crowd,—

"Father, dear father, don't forsake us. We are lost without you."

The merchant, having helped Father Sergius to the bench under the elm tree, took upon himself the duties of policeman and began energetically to disperse the crowd. It was true he spoke in a low voice so that Father Sergius could not overhear, but he spoke very decidedly and in an angry tone.

"Get away, get away, I say! He has blessed you. What else do you want? Get along! or you'll catch it. Move on there! Get along there, old woman, with your dirty rags. Go on! Where do you think *you're* going; I told you it was finished. To-morrow's coming, but to-day he's done, I tell you!"

"Dear father! I only want to look on his dear face with my own little eyes," said an old woman.

"Little eyes indeed! You don't get in here!"

Father Sergius noticed that the merchant was doing it rather too thoroughly, and spoke to his attendant saying the crowd was not to be turned away. He knew perfectly well that the crowd would be dispersed all the same, and he desired to remain alone and rest, but he sent his attendant with the order merely to make an impression.

"Well — well — I'm not turning them away; I'm only talking to them," answered the merchant. "They'll drive the man to death. They have no mercy. They're only thinking of themselves. No, I say! Get away! To-morrow!" and he drove them all away.

The merchant took all this trouble because he loved order and liked to turn people away and abuse them; but more because he wanted to have Father Sergius to himself. He was a widower and had an only daughter, an invalid and unmarried. He had brought her fourteen hundred miles to Father Sergius to be healed. During the two years of the girl's illness he had taken her to various cures. First to the university clinic in the principal town of the province, but this was not of much use; then to a peasant in the province of Samara, who did her a little good. Afterwards he took her to a doctor in Moscow and paid him a huge fee; but this did not help at all. Then he was told that Father Sergius wrought

cures, so he brought her to him. Consequently when he had scattered the crowd he approached Father Sergius, and falling upon his knees without any warning, he said in a loud voice,—

"Holy Father! Bless my afflicted child and heal her of her sufferings. I venture to prostrate myself at your holy feet," and he put one hand on another, palms up, cup-wise. All this he did as if it were something distinctly and rigidly appointed by law and usage; as if it were the sole and precise method by which a man should request the healing of his daughter. He did it with such conviction that even Sergius felt for the moment that that was just the right way. However he bade him rise from his knees and tell him what the trouble was. The merchant said that his daughter, a girl of twenty-two, had fallen ill two years before, after the sudden death of her mother. She just said "Ah!" as he put it, and went out of her mind. He had brought her fourteen hundred miles, and she was waiting in the hostelry till Father Sergius could receive her. She never went out by day, being afraid of the sunlight, but only after dusk.

"Is she very weak?" asked Father Sergius.

"No, she has no special weakness, but she's rather stout, and the doctor says she's neurasthenic. If you will just let me fetch her, Father

Sergius, I'll be back with her in a minute. Revive, O holy father, the heart of a parent, restore his line, and save my afflicted offspring with your prayers!" and the merchant fell down on his knees again and bending sideways with his head over his palms, which appeared to hold little heaps of something, remained like a figure in stone. Father Sergius again told him to get up, and thinking once more how trying his work was, and how patiently he bore it in spite of everything, sighed heavily. After a few moments' silence, he said:

"Well, bring her to-night. I will pray over her. But now I am weary," and he closed his eyes. "I will send for you."

The merchant went away, stepping on tiptoe, which made his boots creak still louder, and Father Sergius remained alone.

Father Sergius's life was filled with church services and with visitors; but this day was particularly difficult. In the morning an important official had come to hold a long conference with him. Then a lady came with her son. The son was a young professor, an unbeliever, and his mother, who was ardently religious and devoted to Father Sergius, brought him to Father Sergius that he might talk to him. The talk was very trying. The young man evidently did not wish

to have a discussion with the monk, and just agreed with him in everything, as with an inferior. Father Sergius saw that the youth was an infidel, but that he had nevertheless a clear and tranquil conscience. The memory of the conversation was now unpleasant to him.

"Won't you eat something, Father Sergius?" asked the attendant.

"Very well — bring me something."

The attendant went to a little hut built ten paces from the cave, and Father Sergius remained alone.

The time was long past when Father Sergius lived alone, doing everything for himself and having but a holy wafer and bread for nourishment. He had been warned long ago that he had no right to be careless of his health and he was given wholesome meals, although of Lenten quality. He did not eat much, but more than he had done; and sometimes he even felt a pleasure in eating; the disgust and the sense of sin he had experienced before was gone.

He took some gruel and had a cup of tea with half a roll of white bread. The attendant went away while he remained alone on the bench under the elm-tree. It was a beautiful evening in May. The leaves of the birches, the aspens, the elms, the alder bushes, and the oaks were just beginning

to blossom. The alder bushes behind the elms were still in full bloom. A nightingale was singing near at hand, and two or three more in the bushes down by the river trilled and warbled. From the river came the songs of working-men, perhaps on their way home from their labour. The sun was setting behind the forest and was throwing little broken rays of light among the leaves. This side was bright green and the other side was dark. Beetles were flying about and, colliding together, were falling to the ground. After supper Father Sergius began to repeat a prayer mentally:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us," and then he read a psalm. Suddenly, in the middle of the psalm a sparrow flew out from a bush on the ground, and hopping along, came to him; then it flew away frightened. He was reading a prayer that bore upon renunciation of the world and hastened to get to the end of it in order that he might send for the merchant and his daughter. He was interested in the daughter because she offered a sort of diversion, and also because she and her father thought him a saint, a saint whose prayer was efficacious. He repudiated the idea, but in the depths of his soul he nevertheless concurred. He often won-

dered how he, Sergius Kasatsky, had contrived to become such an extraordinary saint and worker of miracles, but that it was a fact he did not doubt. He could not fail to believe in the miracles he saw with his own eyes, beginning with the sick boy and ending with this last old woman who had recovered her sight through his prayers. Strange as it was, it was a fact. Accordingly the merchant's daughter interested him as a new individual that had faith in him, and besides, as an occasion of bearing witness to his healing power and to his fame.

"People come thousands of miles. Papers talk about it. The emperor knows. All Europe knows — all godless Europe." And then he felt ashamed of his vanity and began to pray:

"God, King of Heaven, Comforter, True Soul, come into — inspire me — and cleanse me from all sin, and save, O All-merciful, my soul. Cleanse me from the sin of worldly vanity that has overtaken me," he said, remembering how often he had made that prayer and how vain it had been. His prayers worked miracles for others, but as for himself God had not granted him strength to conquer this petty passion. He remembered his prayers at the commencement of his seclusion when he asked for the grace of pur-

ity, humility, and love, and how it seemed to him at that time that God heard his prayers. He had retained his purity and had hewn off his finger. He raised the stump of the finger with folds of skin on it to his lips, and kissed it. It seemed to him now, that at that time when he had been filled with disgust at his own sinfulness, he had been humble; and that he had also possessed love. He recalled also the tender feelings with which he had received the old drunken soldier who had come to ask alms of him; and how he had received *her*. And now; he asked himself whether he loved anybody; whether he loved Sophia Ivanovna or Father Serafian; whether he had any feeling of love for those who had come to him that day. He asked himself if he had felt any love toward the learned young man with whom he had held that instructive discussion with the object only of showing off his own intelligence and proving that he had not fallen behind in knowledge.

He wanted love from them, and rejoiced in it; but felt no love himself for them. Now he had neither love nor humility. He was pleased to hear that the merchant's daughter was twenty-two, and was anxious to know if she was good-looking. When he inquired if she was weak, he only wanted to know if she had feminine charm. "Is it true that I have fallen so low?" he

thought. "God help me! Restore my strength — restore me, O God my Saviour!" and he clasped his hands and began to pray.

The nightingales sang, a beetle flew at him and crept along the back of his neck. He brushed it away.

"But does He exist? What if I am knocking at a house which is locked from without. The bar is on the door, and we can see it. Nightingales, beetles, nature are the bar to our understanding. That young man was perhaps right." He began to pray aloud, and prayed long, till all these thoughts disappeared and he became calm and firm in the faith. He rang the bell, and told the attendant to say that the merchant might now come with his daughter.

The merchant came, leading his daughter by the arm, and brought her to the cell, where he left her.

The daughter was pale, with fair hair. She was very short, and had a frightened, childish face and full figure. Father Sergius remained seated on the bench at the entrance. When the girl passed him and stood near him he blessed her, feeling aghast because of the way in which he looked at her figure. As she passed by him, he felt a sting. He saw by her face that she was sensual and feeble minded. He rose and entered

his cell. She was sitting on a stool waiting for him, and when he entered she rose.

"I want to go back to my papa," she said.

"Do not be afraid," he said. "Where do you feel pain?"

"I feel pain all over," she answered, and suddenly her face brightened with a smile.

"You will regain your health," he said. "Pray."

"What's the use? I've prayed. It doesn't help," and she continued smiling. "I wish you would pray and lay your hands on me. I saw you in a dream."

"How so?"

"I saw you put your hand on my chest."

She took his hand and pressed it to her breast.

"Here."

He yielded his right hand to her.

"What is your name?" he asked, his whole body shaking, and feeling that he was overcome and could not control his instinct.

"Marie, why?"

She took his hand and kissed it, and then put her arm around his waist and pressed him.

"Marie, what are you doing?" he said. "You are a devil, Marie!"

"Oh, perhaps. Never mind."

And embracing him, she sat down at his side on the bed.

At dawn he went out of the door. Had all this really happened? Her father would come. She would tell. "She's a devil. But what have *I* done? Oh, there is the axe which I used to chop off my finger."

He took the axe and went back to the cell.

The attendant came toward him. "Do you want some wood cut? Give me the axe."

He gave him the axe, and entered the cell. She lay asleep. He looked on her with horror. Going back into the cell he put on the peasant clothes, seized the scissors, cut his hair, and then, issuing forth, took the path down the hill to the river, where he had not been for four years.

The road ran along the river. He went by it, walking till noon. Then he went into a cornfield and lay among the corn. Toward evening he approached a village, but did not enter it. He went again to the river, to a cliff.

It was early morning, half an hour before sunrise. All was grey and mournful around him, and a cold, early morning wind blew from the west.

"I must end it all. There is no God. How can I do it? Throw myself in! I can swim;

I should not drown. Hang myself? Yes; just with this belt, to a branch."

This seemed so feasible and so easy that he wanted to pray, as he always did in moments of distress. But there was nothing to pray to. God was not. He dropped down on his elbow, and such a longing for sleep instantly overcame him that he couldn't hold his head up with his arm any longer. Stretching out his arm, he laid his head upon it and went to sleep. But this sleep lasted only a moment. He woke at once, and what followed was half dream and half recollection.

He saw himself as a child in the house of his mother in the country. A carriage was approaching, and out of it stepped Uncle Nicholas Sergeivich, with a long black beard like a spade, and with him a slender girl, Pashinka, with large soft eyes and a timid, pathetic little face. This girl was taken to the place where the boys were playing, and they were forced to play with her, which was very tedious indeed. She was a silly little girl, and it ended in their making fun of her, and making her show them how she swam. She lay down on the floor and went through the motions. They laughed and turned her into ridicule; which, when she became aware of it, made her blush in patches. She looked so piteous that his con-

science pricked him, and he could never forget her kind, submissive, tremulous smile. Sergius remembered how he had seen her since then. A long time ago, just before he became a monk, she had married a landowner who had squandered all her fortune, and who beat her. She had two children, a son and a daughter; but the son died when he was little, and Sergius remembered seeing her very wretched after that, and then again at the monastery, when she was a widow. She was still just the same, not exactly stupid, but insipid, insignificant, and piteous. She had come with her daughter and her daughter's *fiancé*. They were poor at that time, and later on he heard that she was living in a little provincial town and was almost destitute.

"Why does she come into my head?" he asked himself, but still he could not help thinking about her. "Where is she? What has become of her? Is she as unhappy as she was when she had to show us how she swam on the floor? But what's the use of my thinking of her now? My business is to put an end to myself."

Again he was afraid, and again, in order to spare himself, he began to think about her. Thus he lay a long time, thinking now of his extraordinary end, now of Pashinka. She seemed somehow the means of his salvation. At last he fell

asleep, and in his dream he saw an angel, who came to him and said: —

"Go to Pashinka. Find out what you have to do, and what your sin is, and what is your way of salvation."

He awoke, convinced that this was a vision from on high. He rejoiced, and resolved to do as he was told in the dream. He knew the town where she lived, three hundred miles away, so he walked to that place.

VI

PASHINKA was no longer Pashinka. She had become Praskovia Mikhailovna, old, wrinkled, and shrivelled, the mother-in-law of a drunken official, Mavrikiev — a failure. She lived in the little provincial town where he had occupied his last position, and had supported the family: a daughter, a nervous, ailing husband, and five grandchildren. Her sole means of supporting them was by giving music lessons to the daughters of merchants for fifty kopeks an hour. She had sometimes four, sometimes five lessons a day, and earned about sixty roubles a month. They all lived for the moment on that in expectation of another situation. She had sent letters to all her friends and relations, asking for a post for her son-in-law, and had also written to Sergius, but the letter had never reached him.

It was Saturday, and Praskovia Mikhailovna was kneading dough for currant bread such as the cook, a serf on her father's estate, used to make, for she wanted to give her grandchildren a treat on Sunday.

Her daughter Masha was looking after her youngest child, and the eldest boy and girl were at school. As for her husband, he had not slept that night, and was now asleep. Praskovia Mikhailovna had not slept well either, trying to appease her daughter's anger against her husband.

She saw that her son-in-law, being a weak character, could not talk or act differently, and she perceived that the reproaches of his wife availed nothing. All her energies were employed in softening these reproaches. She did not want harsh feelings and resentment to exist. Physically she could not stand a condition of ill-will. It was clear to her that bitter feelings did not mend matters, but simply made them worse. She did not think about it. Seeing anger made her suffer precisely as a bad odour or a shrill sound or a blow.

She was just showing Lucaria, the servant, how to mix the dough when her grandson, Misha, a boy six years old, with little crooked legs in darned stockings, ran into the kitchen looking frightened.

"Grandmother, a dreadful old man wants to see you!"

Lucaria looked out of the door.

"Oh, ma'am, it's a pilgrim."

Praskovia Mikhailovna wiped her thin elbows

with her hands, and then her hands on her apron, and was about to go into the room to get five kopeks out of her purse, when she remembered that she had only a ten kopek piece, so, deciding to give bread instead, she turned to the cupboard. But then she blushed at the thought of having grudged him alms, and ordering Lucaria to cut a slice of bread, went to fetch the ten kopeks. "That serves you right," she said to herself. "Now you must give twice as much."

She gave both bread and money to the pilgrim with apologies, and in doing so she was not at all proud of her generosity. On the contrary, she was ashamed of having given so little. The man had such an imposing appearance.

In spite of having tramped three hundred miles, begging in the name of Christ, and being nearly in rags; in spite of having grown thin and weather-beaten, and having his hair cut, and wearing a peasant cap and boots; in spite, also, of his bowing with great humility, Sergius had the same impressive appearance which had attracted every one to him. Praskovia Mikhailovna did not recognise him. How could she, not having seen him for many years?

"Excuse this humble gift, father. Wouldn't you like something to eat?"

He took the bread and money, and Praskovia

Mikhailovna was astonished that he did not go, but stood looking at her.

"Pashinka, I have come to you. Won't you take me in?"

His beautiful black eyes looked at her intently, imploringly, and shone, tears starting; and his lips quivered painfully under the grey moustache.

Praskovia Mikhailovna pressed her hand to her shrivelled breast, opened her mouth, and stared at the pilgrim with dilated eyes.

"It can't be possible! Steph — Sergius — Father Sergius!"

"Yes, it is I," said Sergius in a low voice. "But no longer Sergius or Father Sergius, but a great sinner, Stephen Kasatsky — a great sinner, a lost sinner. Take me in — help me."

"No, it can't be possible! Such great humility! Come?" She stretched out her hand, but he did not take it. He only followed her.

But where could she lead him? They had very little space. She had a tiny little room for herself, hardly more than a closet, but even that she had given up to her daughter, and now Masha was sitting there rocking the baby to sleep.

"Please, be seated here," she said to Sergius, pointing to a bench in the kitchen. He sat down at once, and took off, with an evidently accustomed

action, the straps of his wallet first from one shoulder and then from the other.

"Heavens! What humility! What an honour, and now —"

Sergius did not answer, but smiled meekly, laying his wallet on one side.

"Masha, do you know who this is?" And Praskovia Mikhailovna told her daughter in a whisper. They took the bed and the cradle out of the little room, and made it ready for Sergius.

Praskovia Mikhailovna led him in.

"Now have a rest. Excuse this humble room. I must go."

"Where?"

"I have lessons. I'm ashamed to say I teach music."

"Music! That is well. But just one thing, Praskovia Mikhailovna. I came to you with an object. Could I have a talk with you?"

"I shall be happy. Will this evening do?"

"It will. One thing more. Do not say who I am. I have only revealed myself to you. No one knows where I went, and no one need know."

"Oh, but I told my daughter —"

"Well, ask her not to tell any one."

Sergius took off his boots and slept after a sleepless night and a forty-mile tramp.

When Praskovia Mikhailovna returned Sergius was sitting in the little room waiting for her. He had not come out for dinner, but had some soup and gruel which Lucaria brought in to him.

"Why did you return earlier than you said?" asked Father Sergius. "May I speak to you now?"

"What have I done to deserve the happiness of having such a guest! I only missed one lesson. That can wait. I have dreamed for a long time of going to see you. I wrote to you. And now this good fortune!"

"Pashinka, please — listen to what I am going to tell you, as if it were a confession; as if it were something I should say to God in the hour of death. Pashinka, I am not a holy man. I am a vile and loathsome sinner. I have gone astray through pride, and I am the vilest of the vile."

Pashinka stared at him. She believed what he said. Then, when she had quite taken it in, she touched his hand and smiled sadly, and said,—

"Stevie, perhaps you exaggerate."

"No, Pashinka, I am an adulterer, a murderer, a blasphemer, a cheat."

"My God, what does he mean?" she muttered.

"But I must go on living. I, who thought I

knew everything, who taught others how to live, I know nothing. I ask you to teach me."

"O Stevie! You are laughing at me. Why do you always laugh at me?"

"Very well; have it as you will that I am laughing at you. Still, tell me how you live, and how you have lived your life."

"I? But I've lived a very bad life, the worst life possible. Now God is punishing me, and I deserve it. And I am so miserable now — so miserable!"

"And your marriage — how did you get on?"

"It was all bad. I married because I fell in love from low motives. Father didn't want me to, but I wouldn't listen to anything. I just married. And then, instead of helping my husband, I made him wretched by my jealousy, which I couldn't overcome."

"He drank, I heard."

"Well, but I didn't give him any peace. I reproached him. That's a disease. He couldn't stop it. I remember now how I took his drink away from him. We had such frightful scenes!" She looked at Kasatsky with pain in her beautiful eyes at the recollection.

Kasatsky called to mind that he had been told that her husband beat Pashinka, and looking at her thin withered neck with veins standing out

behind her ears, the thin coil of hair, half grey, half auburn, he saw it all just as it happened.

"Then I was left alone with two children, and with no means."

"But you had an estate!"

"Oh, that was sold when Vasily was alive. And the money was — spent. We had to live, and I didn't know how to work — like all the young ladies of that time. I was worse than the rest — quite helpless. So we spent everything we had. I taught the children. Masha had learnt something. Then Misha fell ill when he was in the fourth class in the school, and God took him. Masha fell in love with Vania, my son-in-law. He's a good man but very unfortunate. He's ill."

"Mother," interrupted her daughter, "take Misha. I can't be everywhere."

Praskovia Mikhailovna started, rose, and stepping quickly in her worn shoes, went out of the room and came back with a boy of two in her arms. The child was throwing himself backwards and grabbing at her shawl.

"Where was I? Yes — he had a very good post here, and such a good chief, too. But poor Vania couldn't go on, and he had to give up his position."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Neurasthenia. It's such a horrid illness. We have been to the doctor, but he ought to go away, and we can't afford it. Still, I hope it will pass. He doesn't suffer much pain, but —"

"Lucaria!" said a feeble and angry voice. "She's always sent out when I need her. Mother!"

"I'm coming," said Praskovia Mikhailovna, again interrupting her conversation. "You see, he hasn't had his dinner yet. He can't eat with us."

She went out and arranged something, and came back, wiping her thin, dark hands.

"Well, this is the way I live. I complain, and I'm not satisfied, but, thank God, all my grandchildren are such nice healthy children, and life is quite bearable. But why am I talking about myself?"

"What do you live on?"

"Why, I earn a little. How I used to hate music! and now it's so useful to me!"

Her small hand lay on the chest of drawers that stood beside her where she was sitting, and she drummed exercises with her thin fingers.

"How much are you paid for your lessons?"

"Sometimes a rouble, sometimes fifty kopeks, and sometimes thirty. They are all so kind to me."

"And do your pupils get on well?" asked Kasatsky, smiling faintly with his eyes.

Praskovia Mikhailovna did not believe at first that he was asking her seriously, and looked inquiringly into his eyes.

"Some of them do," she said. "I have one very nice pupil — the butcher's daughter. Such a good, kind girl. If I were a clever woman I could surely use my father's influence and get a position for my son-in-law. But it is my fault they are so badly off. I brought them to it."

"Yes, yes," said Kasatsky, dropping his head. "Well, Pashinka, and what about your attitude to the church?"

"Oh, don't speak of it! I'm so bad that way. I have neglected it so! When the children have to go, I fast and go to communion with them, but as for the rest of the time I often do not go for a month. I just send them."

"And why don't you go?"

"Well, to tell the truth —" she blushed —"I'm ashamed for Masha's sake and the children's to go in my old clothes. And I haven't anything else. Besides, I'm just lazy."

"And do you pray at home?"

"I do, but it's just a mechanical sort of praying. I know it's wrong, but I have no real religious feeling. I only know I'm wicked — that's all."

"Yes, yes. That's right, that's right!" said Kasatsky, as if in approval.

"I'm coming — I'm coming!" she called, in answer to her son-in-law, and, tidying her hair, went to the other room.

This time she was absent a long while. When she returned, Kasatsky was sitting in the same position, his elbow on his knee and his head down. But his wallet was ready strapped on his back.

When she came in with a little tin lamp without a shade, he raised his beautiful, weary eyes, and sighed deeply.

"I didn't tell them who you were," she began shyly. "I just said you were a pilgrim — a nobleman — and that I used to know you. Won't you come into the dining-room and have tea?"

"No."

"Then I'll bring some in to you here."

"No; I don't want anything. God bless you, Pashinka. I am going now. If you have any pity for me, don't tell any one you have seen me. For the love of God, tell no one. I thank you. I would kneel down before you, but I know it would only make you feel awkward. Forgive me, for Christ's sake."

"Give me your blessing."

"God bless you. Forgive me, for Christ's sake."

He rose to go, but she restrained him and brought him some bread and butter, which he took and departed.

It was dark, and he had hardly passed the second house when he was lost to sight, and she only knew he was there because the dog at the priest's house was barking.

"That was the meaning of my vision. Pashinka is what I should have been, and was not. I lived for man, on the pretext of living for God; and she lives for God, imagining she lives for man! Yes; one good deed — a cup of cold water given without expectation of reward — is worth far more than all the benefits I thought I was bestowing on the world. But was there not, after all, one grain of sincere desire to serve God?" he asked himself. And the answer came: "Yes, there was; but it was so soiled, so overgrown with desire for the world's praise. No; there is no God for the man who lives for the praise of the world. I must now seek *Him*."

He walked on, just as he had made his way to Pashinka, from village to village, meeting and parting with other pilgrims, and asking for bread and a night's rest in the name of Christ. Sometimes an angry housekeeper would abuse him, sometimes a drunken peasant would revile him;

but for the most part he was given food and drink, and often something to take with him. Many were favourably disposed towards him on account of his noble bearing. Some, on the other hand, seemed to enjoy the sight of a gentleman so reduced to poverty. But his gentleness vanquished all hearts.

He often found a Bible in a house where he was staying. He would read it aloud, and the people always listened to him, touched by what he read them, and wondering, as if it were something new, although so familiar.

If he succeeded in helping people by his advice or by knowing how to read and write, or by settling a dispute, he did not afterwards wait to see their gratitude, for he went away directly. And little by little God began to reveal Himself within him.

One day he was walking along the road with two women and a soldier. They were stopped by a party consisting of a lady and gentleman in a trap drawn by a trotter, and another gentleman and lady riding. The gentleman beside the lady in the trap was evidently a traveller — a Frenchman — while her husband was on horseback with his daughter.

The party stopped to show the Frenchman the pilgrims, who, according to a superstition of the

Russian peasantry, show their superiority by tramping instead of working. They spoke French, thinking they would not be understood.

"*Demandez-leur,*" asked the Frenchman, "*s'ils sont bien sûres de ce que leur pèlerinage est agréable à Dieu?*"

The old woman answered,—

"Just as God wills it. Our feet have arrived at the holy places, but we can't tell about our hearts."

They asked the soldier. He answered that he was alone in the world, and belonged nowhere.

They asked Kasatsky who he was.

"A servant of God."

"*Qu'est-ce-qu'il dit? Il ne répond pas?*"

"*Il dit qu'il est un serviteur de Dîeu.*"

"*Il doit être un fils de prêtre. Il a de la race. Avez-vous de la petite monnaie?*"

The Frenchman had some change, and gave each of them twenty kopeks.

"*Mais dites-leur que ce n'est pas pour les cierges que je leur donne, mais pour qu'ils se régalent du thé. Tea* — tea," he said, with a smile. "*Pour vous, mon vieux.*" And he patted Kasatsky on the shoulder with his gloved hand.

"Christ save you," said Kasatsky, and without putting on his hat, bent his bald head.

Kasatsky rejoiced particularly in this incident, because he had shown contempt for the world's

opinion, and had done something quite trifling and easy. He accepted twenty kopeks, and gave them afterwards to a blind beggar who was a friend of his.

The less he cared for the opinion of the world the more he felt that God was with him.

For eight months Kasatsky tramped in this fashion, until at last he was arrested in a provincial town in a night-shelter where he passed the night with other pilgrims. Having no passport to show, he was taken to the police-station. When he was asked for documents to prove his identity he said he had none; that he was a servant of God. He was numbered among the tramps and sent to Siberia.

There he settled down on the estate of a rich peasant, where he still lives. He works in the vegetable garden, teaches the children to read and write, and nurses the sick.

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

1. ON RELIGION.
2. ON WAR.
3. ON STATE AND FATHERLAND.
4. ON TAXES.
5. ON JUDGING.
6. ON KINDNESS.
7. ON REMUNERATION OF LABOUR.
8. ON DRINK.
9. ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.
10. ON PRISONS.
11. ON WEALTH.
12. ON THOSE WHO OFFEND YOU.
13. ON THE PRESS.
14. ON REPENTANCE.
15. ON ART.
16. ON SCIENCE.
17. ON GOING TO LAW.
18. ON THE CRIMINAL COURT.
19. ON PROPERTY.
20. ON CHILDREN.
21. ON EDUCATION.

ON RELIGION.

BOY.

WHY is Nurse so nicely dressed to-day, and why did she make me wear that new shirt?

MOTHER.

Because this is a holiday, and we are going to church.

BOY.

What holiday?

MOTHER.

Ascension day.

BOY.

What does Ascension mean?

MOTHER.

It means that Jesus Christ has ascended to heaven.

BOY.

What does that mean: ascended?

MOTHER.

It means that He flew up to heaven.

BOY.

How did he fly? With his wings?

MOTHER.

Without any wings whatever. He simply flew up because He is God, and God can do anything.

BOY.

But where did he fly to? Father told me there was nothing in heaven at all, and we only think we see something; that there's nothing but stars up there, and behind them more stars still, and that there is no end to it. Then where did He fly to?

MOTHER.

(*smiling.*) You are unable to understand everything. You must believe.

BOY.

What must I believe?

MOTHER.

What you are told by grown-up people.

BOY.

But when I said to you that somebody was going to die because some salt had been spilt, you said I was not to believe in nonsense.

MOTHER.

Of course you are not to believe in nonsense.

BOY.

But how am I to know what is nonsense and what is not?

MOTHER.

You must believe what the true faith says, and not in nonsense.

BOY.

Which is the true faith then?

MOTHER.

Our faith is the true one. (*To herself.*) I am afraid I am talking nonsense. (*Aloud.*) Go and tell father we are ready for church, and get your coat.

BOY.

And shall we have chocolate after church?

ON WAR

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT, *nine years;* PETIA ORLOV, *ten years; and* MASHA ORLOV, *eight years.*

KARLCHEN.

. . . Because we Prussians will not allow Russia to rob us of our land.

PETIA.

But we say this land belongs to us; we conquered it first.

MASHA.

To whom? Is it ours?

PETIA.

You are a child, and you don't understand. "To us" means to our state.

KARLCHEN.

It is this way; some belong to one state and some to another.

MASHA.

What do I belong to?

PETIA.

You belong to Russia, like the rest of us.

MASHA.

And if I don't want to?

PETIA.

It doesn't matter whether you want to or not. You are Russian all the same. Every nation has its Tsar, its King.

KARLCHEN.

(*interrupting.*) And a parliament.

PETIA.

Each state has its army, each state raises taxes.

MASHA.

But why must each state stand by itself?

PETIA.

What a silly question! Because each state *is* a separate one.

MASHA.

But why must it exist apart?

PETIA.

Can't you understand? Because everybody loves his own country.

MASHA.

I don't understand why they must be separate from the rest. Wouldn't it be better if they all kept together?

PETIA.

To keep together is all right when you play games. But this is no game: it is a very serious matter.

MASHA.

I don't understand.

KARLCHEN.

You will when you grow up.

MASHA.

Then I don't want to grow up.

PETIA.

Such a tiny girl, and obstinate already, just like all of them.

ON STATE AND FATHERLAND

GAVRILA, *a soldier in the reserve, a servant.*
MISHA, *his master's young son.*

GAVRILA.

Good-bye, Mishenka, my dear little master. Who knows whether God will permit me to see you again?

MISHA.

Are you really leaving?

GAVRILA.

I have to. There is war again. And I am in the reserve.

MISHA.

A war with whom? Who's fighting, and who are they fighting against?

GAVRILA.

God knows. It's very difficult to understand all that. I have read about it in the papers, but I

can't make it out. They say that some one in Austria has a grudge against us because of some favour he did to what's-their-names. . . .

MISHA.

But what are you fighting for?

GAVRILA.

I am fighting for the Tsar, of course; for my country and the Orthodox Faith.

MISHA.

But you don't wish to go to the war, do you?

GAVRILA.

Certainly not. To leave my wife and my children. . . . Do you suppose I would leave this happy life of my own free will?

MISHA.

Then why do you go? Tell them you don't want to, and stop here. What can they do to you?

GAVRILA.

(*laughing.*) What can they do? They will take me by force.

MISHA.

Who can take you by force?

GAVRILA.

Men who have to obey, and who are exactly in my position.

MISHA.

Why will they take you by force if they are in the same position?

GAVRILA.

Because of the authorities. They will be ordered to take me, and they will have to do it.

MISHA.

But suppose they don't want to?

GAVRILA.

They have to obey.

MISHA.

But why?

GAVRILA.

Why? Because of the law.

MISHA.

What law?

GAVRILA.

You are a funny boy. It's a pleasure to chat with you. But now I had better go and get the samovar ready. It will be for the last time.

ON TAXES

THE BAILIFF AND GRUSHKA.

BAILIFF.

(*entering a poor cottage. Nobody is in except* GRUSHKA, *a little girl of seven. He looks around him.*) Nobody at home?

GRUSHKA.

Mother has gone to bring home the cow, and Fedka is at work in the master's yard.

BAILIFF.

Well, tell your mother the bailiff called. Tell her I am giving her notice for the third time, and that she must pay her taxes before Sunday without fail, or else I will take her cow.

GRUSHKA.

The cow? Are you a thief? We will not let you take our cow.

BAILIFF.

(*smiling.*) What a smart girl, I say! What is your name?

GRUSHKA.

Grushka.

BAILIFF.

You are a good girl, Grushka. Now listen. Tell your mother that, although I am not a thief, I will take her cow.

GRUSHKA.

Why will you take our cow if you are not a thief?

BAILIFF.

Because what is due must be paid. I shall take the cow for the taxes that are not paid.

GRUSHKA.

What's that: taxes?

BAILIFF.

What a nuisance of a girl! What are taxes? They are money paid by the people by the order of the Tsar.

GRUSHKA.

To whom?

BAILIFF.

The Tsar will look after that when the money comes in.

GRUSHKA.

He's not poor, is he? We are the poor people.

The Tsar is rich. Why does he want us to give him money?

BAILIFF.

He does not take it for himself. He spends it on us, fools that we are. It all goes to supply our needs — to pay the authorities, the army, the schools. It is for our own good that we pay taxes.

GRUSHKA.

How does it benefit us if our cow is taken away? There's no good in that.

BAILIFF.

You will understand that when you are grown-up. Now, mind you give your mother my message.

GRUSHKA.

I will not repeat all your nonsense to her. You can do whatever you and the Tsar want. And we shall mind our own business.

BAILIFF.

What a devil of a girl she will be when she grows up!

ON JUDGING

MITIA, *a boy of ten;* ILIUSHA, *a boy of nine;* SONIA, *a girl of six.*

MITIA.

I told Peter Semenovich we could get used to wearing no clothes at all. And he said, "That is impossible." Then I told him Michael Ivanovich said that just as we have managed to get our bare faces used to the cold, we could do the same with our whole body. Peter Semenovich said, "Your Michael Ivanovich is a fool." (*He laughs.*) And Michael Ivanovich said to me only yesterday, "Peter Semenovich is talking a lot of nonsense. But, of course," he added, "there's no law for fools." (*He laughs.*)

ILIUSHA.

If I were you I would tell Peter Semenovich, "You abuse Michael Ivanovich, and he does the same to you."

MITIA.

No; but truly, I wish I knew which of them is the fool.

SONIA.

They both are. Whoever calls another person a fool is a fool himself.

ILIUSHA.

And you have called them both fools. Then you are one also.

MITIA.

Well, I hate people saying things about each other behind their backs and never openly to their faces. When I am grown-up I shan't be like that. I shall always say what I think.

ILIUSHA.

So shall I.

SONIA.

And I shall do just whatever I like.

MITIA.

What do you mean?

SONIA.

Why, I shall say what I think — if I choose. And if I don't choose, I won't.

ILIUSHA.

You're a big fool, that is what you are.

SONIA.

And you have just said you will never call people names. But of course. . . .

ON KINDNESS

The children, MASHA *and* MISHA, *are building a tent for their dolls in front of the house.*

MISHA.

(*in an angry tone to* MASHA.) No, not this. Bring that stick there. What a blockhead you are!

AN OLD WOMAN.

(*coming out of the house, crossing herself, and muttering.*) Jesus Christ reward her! What an angel! She has pity on every one.

(*The* CHILDREN *cease to play, and look at the old woman.*)

MISHA.

Who is as good as all that?

OLD WOMAN.

Your mother. She has God in her soul. She pities us, the poor. She has given me a skirt — and some tea, and money too. The Queen of

Heaven save her! Not like that godless man. "Such a lot of you," he says, "tramping about here." And such savage dogs he has!

MISHA.

Who is that?

OLD WOMAN.

The man opposite. The wine merchant. A very unkind gentleman, I can tell you. But never mind. I am so thankful to the dear lady. She has given me presents, has relieved me, miserable creature that I am. How could we exist if it were not for such kind people? (*She weeps.*)

MASHA.

(*to* MISHA.) How good she is!

OLD WOMAN.

When you are grown up, children, be as kind as she is to the poor. God will reward you.

(*Exit.*)

MISHA.

How wretched she is!

MASHA.

I am so glad mother has given her something.

MISHA.

Why shouldn't one give, if one has got plenty

of everything oneself? We are not poor, and she is.

MASHA.

You remember, John the Baptist said: Whoever has two coats, let him give away one.

MISHA.

Oh, when I am grown up I will give away everything I have.

MASHA.

Not everything, I should think.

MISHA.

Why not?

MASHA.

But what would you have left for yourself?

MISHA.

I don't care. We must always be kind. Then the whole world will be happy.

(MISHA *stopped playing with his sister, went to the nursery, tore a page out of a copy-book, wrote a line on it, and put it in his pocket. On that page was written:* WE MUST BE KIND.)

ON REMUNERATION OF LABOUR

The FATHER; KATIA, *a girl of nine;* FEDIA, *a boy of eight.*

KATIA.

Father, our sledge is broken. Couldn't you mend it for us?

FATHER.

No, darling, I can not. I don't know how to do it. Give it to Prohor; he will put it right for you.

KATIA.

We have asked him to already. He says he is busy. He is making a gate.

FATHER.

Well, then, you must just wait a little with your sledge.

FEDIA.

And you, father, can't you mend it for us, really?

FATHER.

(*smiling.*) Really, my boy.

FEDIA.

Can't you do any work at all?

FATHER.

(*laughing.*) Oh yes, there are some kinds of work I can do. But not the kind that Prohor does.

FEDIA.

Can you make samovars like Vania?

FATHER.

No.

FEDIA.

Or harness horses?

FATHER.

Not that either.

FEDIA.

I wonder why are we all unable to do any work, and they do it all for us. Ought it to be like that?

FATHER.

Everybody has to do the work he is fit for. Learn, like a good boy, and you will know what work everybody has to do.

FEDIA.

Are we not to learn how to prepare food and to harness horses?

FATHER.

There are things more necessary than that.

FEDIA.

I know: to be kind, not to get cross, not to abuse people. But isn't it possible to do the cooking and harness horses, and be kind just the same? Isn't that possible?

FATHER.

Undoubtedly. Just wait till you are grown up. Then you will understand.

FEDIA.

And what if I don't grow up?

FATHER.

Don't talk nonsense!

KATIA.

Then we may ask Prohor to mend the sledge?

FATHER.

Yes, do. Go to Prohor and tell him I wish him to do it.

ON DRINK

An evening in the autumn.

(MAKARKA, *a boy of twelve, and* MARFUTKA, *a girl of eight, are coming out of the house into the street.* MARFUTKA *is crying.* PAVLUSHKA, *a boy of ten, stands before the house next door.*)

PAVLUSHKA.

Where the devil are you going to, both of you? Have you any night work?

MAKARKA.

Crazy drunk again.

PAVLUSHKA.

Who? Uncle Prohor?

MAKARKA.

Of course.

MARFUTKA.

He is beating mother —

MAKARKA.

I won't go inside to-night. He would hit me also. (*Sitting down on the doorstep.*) I will stay here the whole night. I will.

(MARFUTKA *weeps.*)

PAVLUSHKA.

Stop crying. Never mind. It can't be helped. Stop crying, I say.

MARFUTKA.

If I was the Tsar, I would have the people who give him any drink just beaten to death. I would not allow anybody to sell brandy.

PAVLUSHKA.

Wouldn't you? But it is the Tsar himself who sells it. He doesn't let anybody else sell it, for fear it would lessen his own profits.

MARFUTKA.

It is a lie!

PAVLUSHKA.

Humph! A lie! You just ask anybody you like. Why have they put Akulina in prison? Because they did not want her to sell brandy and lessen their profits.

MAKARKA.

Is that really so! I heard she had done something against the law.

PAVLUSHKA.

What she did against the law was selling brandy.

MARFUTKA.

I would not allow her to sell it either. It is just that brandy that does all the mischief. Sometimes he is very nice, and then at other times he hits everybody.

MAKARKA.

(*to* PAVLUSHKA.) You say very strange things. I will ask the schoolmaster to-morrow. He must know.

PAVLUSHKA.

Do ask him.

(*The next morning* PROHOR, MAKARKA'S *father, after a night's sleep, goes to refresh himself with a drink;* MAKARKA'S *mother, with a swollen eye, is kneading bread.* MAKARKA *has gone to school. The* SCHOOLMASTER *is sitting at the door of the village school, watching the children coming in.*)

MAKARKA.

(*coming up to the schoolmaster.*) Tell me, please, Eugene Semenovich, is it true, what a fellow was telling me, that the Tsar makes a busi-

ness of selling brandy, and that is why Akulina has been sent to prison?

SCHOOLMASTER.

That is a very silly question, and whoever told you that is a fool. The Tsar sells nothing whatsoever. A tsar never does. As for Akulina, she was put in prison because she was selling brandy without a license, and was thereby lessening the revenues of the Crown.

MAKARKA.

How lessening?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Because there is a duty on spirits. A barrel costs so much in the factory, and is sold to the public for so much more. This surplus constitutes the income of the state. The largest revenue comes from it, and amounts to many millions.

MAKARKA.

Then the more brandy people drink the greater the income?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Certainly. If it were not for that income there would be nothing to keep the army with, or schools, or all the rest of the things you need.

MAKARKA.

But if all those things are necessary, why not take the money directly for the necessary things? Why get it by means of brandy?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Why? Because that is the law. But the children are all in now. Take your seats.

ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

PETER PETROVICH, *a professor.* MARIA IVANOVNA, *his wife* (*sewing.*) FEDIA, *their son, a boy of nine* (*listening to his father's conversation.*) IVAN VASILIEVICH, *counsel for the prosecution in the court martial.*

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

The experience of history cannot be gainsaid. We have not only seen in France after the revolution, and at other historical moments, but in our own country as well, that doing away with — I mean the removal of perverted and dangerous members of society has in fact the desired result.

PETER PETROVICH.

No, we cannot know what the consequences of this are in reality. The proclamation of a state of siege is therefore not justified.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

But neither have we the right to presume that the consequences of a state of siege must be bad,

or, if it proves to be so, that such consequences are brought about by the employment of a state of siege. This is one point. The other is that fear cannot fail to influence those who have lost every human sensibility and are like beasts. What except fear could have any effect on men like that one who calmly stabbed an old woman and three children in order to steal three hundred roubles?

PETER PETROVICH.

But I am not against capital punishment in principle; I am only opposed to the special courts martial which are so often formed. If these frequent executions did nothing but inspire fear, it would be different. But in addition they pervert the mind, and killing becomes a habit of thought.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

There again we don't know anything about the remote consequences, but we do know, on the contrary, how beneficial. . . .

PETER PETROVICH.

Beneficial?

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

Yes, how beneficial the immediate results are, and we have no right to deny it. How could

society similarly fail to exact the penalty from such a wretch as . . .

PETER PETROVICH.

You mean society must take its revenge?

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

No, the object is not revenge. On the contrary, it must substitute for personal revenge the penalty imposed for the good of the community.

PETER PETROVICH.

But in that case it must be subject to regulations settled by the law once for ever, and not as a special order of things.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

The penalty imposed by the community is a substitute for casual, exaggerated revenge, in many cases ungrounded and erroneous, which a private individual might take.

PETER PETROVICH.

(*passionately.*) Do you really mean to say the penalty imposed by society is never casual, is always well founded, is never erroneous? I cannot admit that. None of your arguments could ever convince me or anyone else that this is true

of a state of siege, under which thousands have been executed . . . and under which executions are still going on — that all this is both just and legal, and beneficial into the bargain! (*Rises and walks up and down in great agitation.*)

FEDIA.

(*to his mother.*) Mother, what is father talking about?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Father thinks it wrong that so many people are put to death.

FEDIA.

Do you mean really put to death?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes. He thinks it ought not to be done so frequently.

FEDIA.

(*coming up to his father.*) Father, isn't it written in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill"? Doesn't that mean you are not to kill at all?

PETER PETROVICH.

(*smiling.*) That does not refer to what we are talking about. It only means that men are not to kill other men.

FEDIA.

But when they execute they kill, don't they?

PETER PETROVICH.

Certainly. But the thing is to know why and when it is permissible.

FEDIA.

When is it?

PETER PETROVICH.

Why, think of a war, or of a great villain who has committed many murders. How could one leave him unpunished?

FEDIA.

But isn't it written in the Gospel that we must love and forgive everybody?

PETER PETROVICH.

If we could do that it would be splendid. But that cannot be.

FEDIA.

Why?

PETER PETROVICH.

(*to* IVAN VASILIEVICH, *who listens to* FEDIA *with a smile.*) As I said, dear Ivan Vasilievich, I cannot and will not admit the benefit of a state of siege and courts-martial.

ON PRISONS

SEMKA, *a boy of thirteen*; AKSUTKA, *a girl of ten;* PALASHKA, *a girl of nine;* VANKA, *a boy of eight. They are sitting at the well, with baskets of mushrooms which they have gathered.*

AKSUTKA.

Aunt Matrena was crying so desperately. And the children too would not leave off howling, all at the same time.

VANKA.

Why were they howling?

PALASHKA.

What about? Why, their father has been taken off to prison. Who should cry but the family?

VANKA.

Why is he in prison?

AKSUTKA.

I don't know. They came and told him to get

his things ready and led him away. We saw it all from our cottage.

SEMKA.

Serves him right for being a horse-stealer. He stole a horse from Demkin's place and one from Hramov's. He and his gang also got hold of our gelding. Who could love him for that?

AKSUTKA.

That is all right, but I am sorry for the poor brats. There are four of them. And so poor — no bread in the house. To-day they had to come to us.

SEMKA.

Serves the thief right.

MITKA.

But he's the only one that is the thief. Why must his children become beggars?

SEMKA.

Why did he steal?

MITKA.

The kid's didn't steal — it is just he.

SEMKA.

Kids indeed! Why did he do wrong? That doesn't alter the case, that he has got children. Does that give him the right to be a thief?

VANKA.

What will they do to him in prison?

AKSUTKA.

He will just sit there. That's all.

VANKA.

And will they give him food?

SEMKA.

That's just the reason why they're not afraid, those damned horse-thieves! He doesn't mind going to prison. They provide him with everything and he has nothing to do but sit idle the whole day long. If I were the Tsar, I would know how to manage those horse-thieves. . . . I would teach them a lesson that would make them give up the habit of stealing. Now he has nothing to worry him. He sits in the company of fellows like himself, and they teach each other how to steal. Grandfather said Petrusha was quite a good boy when he went to prison for the first time, but he came out a desperate villain. Since then he's taken to —

VANKA.

Then why do they put people in prison?

SEMKA.

Just ask them.

AKSUTKA.

He will have all his food given to him —

SEMKA.

(*agreeing.*) So he will get more accustomed to finding the food ready for him!

AKSUTKA.

While the kiddies and their mother have to die of starvation. They are our neighbours; we can't help pitying them. When they come asking for bread, we can't refuse. How could we?

VANKA.

Then why are those people put in prison?

SEMKA.

What else could be done with them?

VANKA.

What? What could be done? One must somehow manage that. . . .

SEMKA.

Yes, somehow! But you don't know how. There have been people with more brains than you've got who have thought about that, and they couldn't invent anything.

PALASHKA.

I think if I had been a queen . . .

AKSUTKA.

(*laughing.*) Well, what would you have done, my queen?

PALASHKA.

I would have things so that nobody would steal and the children would not cry.

AKSUTKA.

How would you do that?

PALASHKA.

I would just see that everybody was given what he needed, that nobody was wronged by anybody else, and that they were all happy.

SEMKA.

Three cheers for the queen! But how would you manage that?

PALASHKA.

I would just do it, you would see.

MITKA.

Let us all go to the birch woods. The girls have been gathering a lot there lately.

SEMKA.

All right. Come along, you fellows. And you, queen, mind you don't drop your mushrooms. You are so sharp.

(*They get up and go away.*)

ON WEALTH

The LANDLORD, *his* WIFE, *their* DAUGHTER *and their son* VASIA, *six years old, are having tea on the veranda. The grown-up children are playing tennis.* A YOUNG BEGGAR *comes up to the veranda.*

LANDLORD.

(*to the beggar.*) What do you want?

BEGGAR.

(*bowing to him.*) I dare say you know. Have pity on a man out of work. I am tramping, with nothing to eat, and no clothes to wear. I have been to Moscow, and am trying to get home. Help a poor man.

LANDLORD.

Why are you poor?

BEGGAR.

Why? Because I haven't got anything.

LANDLORD.

You would not be poor if you worked.

BEGGAR.

I would be glad to, but I can't get a job. Everything is shut down now.

LANDLORD.

How is it other people find work and you cannot?

BEGGAR.

Believe me, upon my soul, I would be only too glad to work. But I can't find a job. Have pity on me, sir. I have not eaten for two days, and I've been tramping all the time.

LANDLORD.

(*to his wife in French.*) Have you any change? I have only notes.

HIS WIFE.

(*to Vasia.*) Be a good boy, go and fetch my purse; it is in my bag on the little table beside my bed.

(VASIA *does not hear what his mother says; he has his eyes fixed on the beggar.*)

THE WIFE

Don't you hear, Vasia? (*Pulling him by the sleeve.*) Vasia!

VASIA.

What, mother?

(THE WIFE *repeats her directions.*)

VASIA.

(*jumping up.*) I am off. (*Goes, looking back at the beggar.*)

LANDLORD.

(*to the beggar.*) Wait a moment. (BEGGAR *steps aside.*)

LANDLORD.

(*to his wife, in French.*) Is it not dreadful? So many are out of work now. It is all laziness. Yet, it is horrid if he really is hungry.

HIS WIFE.

I hear it is just the same abroad. I have read that in New York there are 100,000 unemployed. Another cup of tea?

LANDLORD.

Yes, but much weaker. (*He lights a cigarette; they stop talking.*)

(BEGGAR *looks at them, shakes his head and coughs, evidently to attract their attention.*)

(VASIA *comes running with the purse looks round for the beggar and, passing the purse to his mother, looks again fixedly at the beggar.*)

LANDLORD.

(*taking a ten kopek piece out of the purse.*) There, What's-your-name, take that.

BEGGAR.

(*bows, pulls off his cap and takes the money.*) Thank you, thank you for that much. Many thanks for having pity on a poor man.

LANDLORD.

I pity you chiefly for being out of work. Work would save you from poverty. He who works will never be poor.

BEGGAR.

(*having received the money, puts on his cap and turns away.*) They say truly that work does not make a rich man but a humpback. (*Exit.*)

VASIA.

What did he say!

LANDLORD.

He repeated that stupid peasant's proverb, that work does not make a rich man but a humpback.

VASIA.

What does that mean?

LANDLORD.

It is supposed to mean that work makes a man's back crooked, without ever making him rich.

VASIA.

But that is not true, is it?

FATHER.

Of course not. Those who tramp about like that man there and have no desire to work, are always poor. It's only those who work, who get rich.

VASIA.

Why are we rich, then, when we don't work?

MOTHER.

(*laughing.*) How do you know father doesn't work?

VASIA.

I don't know, but since we are very rich, father ought to be working very hard. Is he, I wonder?

FATHER.

There is work and work. My work is perhaps work that everybody could not do.

VASIA.

What is your work?

FATHER.

My work is to provide for your food, your clothes, and your education.

VASIA.

But hasn't he to provide all that also? Then why is he so miserable when we are so —

FATHER.

(*laughing.*) What a self-made socialist, I say!

MOTHER.

Yes, people say: "A fool can ask more questions than a thousand wise men can answer." Instead of "fool," we ought to say "every child."

ON THOSE WHO OFFEND YOU

MASHA, *a girl of ten;* VANIA, *a boy of eight.*

MASHA.

What I wish is that mother would come home at once and take us shopping, and then to call on Nastia. What would you like to happen now?

VANIA.

I? I wish something would happen like it did yesterday.

MASHA.

What happened yesterday? You mean when Grisha hit you and you both began to cry? There wasn't much good in that.

VANIA.

That's just what was beautiful. Nothing could have been more so. That's what I want to happen again.

MASHA.

I don't understand.

VANIA.

Well, I will explain what I want. Do you remember last Sunday, Uncle P.— you know how I love him. . . .

MASHA.

Who wouldn't. Mother says he is a saint; and it's true.

VANIA.

Well, you remember he told us a story last Sunday about a man whom people used to insult. The more any one insulted him the more he loved the offender. They abused him, and he praised them. They hit him and he helped them. Uncle said that anybody who acts so feels very happy. I liked what he said, and I wanted to be like that man. So, when Grisha hit me yesterday, I remembered my wish and kissed Grisha. He burst out crying. I felt very happy. But with nurse yesterday it was different; she began scolding me, and I quite forgot how I ought to have behaved, and I answered her very rudely. What I wish now is to have the same experience over again that I had with Grisha.

MASHA.

Then you would like somebody to strike you?

VANIA.

I would like it awfully. I would immediately do what I did to Grisha, and I would be so glad.

MASHA.

How stupid! Just like the fool you've always been.

VANIA.

I don't mind being a fool. I only know now what to do, so as to feel happy all the time.

MASHA.

A regular fool! Do you really feel happy, doing so?

VANIA.

Just awfully happy!

ON THE PRESS

The schoolroom at home.

(VOLODIA, *a schoolboy of fourteen, is reading;* SONIA, *a girl of fifteen, is writing. The* YARD-PORTER *enters, carrying a heavy load on his back;* MISHA, *a boy of eight, following him.*)

PORTER.

Where am I to put that bundle, sir? My shoulders are bent down with the weight of it.

VOLODIA.

Where were you told to put it?

PORTER.

Vasily Timofeëvich told me to carry it to the schoolroom and leave it for him.

VOLODIA.

Then put it in the corner.

(PORTER *unloads the bundle and sighs heavily.*)

SONIA.

What is it?

VOLODIA.

"Truth"— a paper.

MISHA.

"Truth"? What do you mean?

SONIA.

Why have you so many?

VOLODIA.

It is a collection of the whole year's issues. (*Continues reading.*)

MISHA.

Has all this been written?

PORTER.

The fellows who wrote it weren't very lazy, I'll bet.

VOLODIA.

(*laughs.*) What did you say?

PORTER.

I said what I meant. It wasn't a lazy lot that wrote all that. Well, I'm going. Will you kindly say I have brought the bundle. (*Exit.*)

SONIA.

(*to* VOLODIA.) What does father want all those papers for?

VOLODIA.

He wants to collect Bolchakov's articles from them.

SONIA.

And Uncle Michael Ivanovich says reading Bolchakov makes him ill.

VOLODIA.

Just like Uncle Michael Ivanovich. He only reads "Truth for All."

MISHA.

And is uncle's "Truth" as big as this?

SONIA.

Bigger. But this is only for one year, and the papers have been published twenty years or more.

MISHA.

That makes twenty such bundles and another twenty more.

SONIA.

(*wishing to mystify* MISHA.) That's nothing. These are only two papers, and besides there are at least thirty more.

VOLODIA.

(*without raising his head.*) Thirty, you say! There are five hundred and thirty in Russia alone. And with those published abroad there are thousands altogether.

MISHA.

They couldn't all be put into this room.

VOLODIA.

Not even in this whole street. But please don't disturb me in my work. To-morrow teacher is sure to call upon me, and you don't give me a chance of learning my lessons with your silly talk.

(*Resumes his reading.*)

MISHA.

I don't think there's any use writing so much.

SONIA.

Why not?

MISHA.

Because if what they write is true, then why say the same thing over and over again? If it isn't, then why say what is not true?

SONIA.

An excellent judgment!

MISHA.

Why do they write such an awful lot?

VOLODIA.

(*without taking his eyes off his book.*) Because if it wasn't for the freedom of the press, how would people know what the truth is?

MISHA.

Father says the "Truth" contains the truth, and Uncle Michael Ivanovich says "Truth" makes him ill. Then how do they know where the truth really is — in "Truth" or in "Truth for All"?

SONIA.

I think you are right. There are really too many papers and magazines and books.

VOLODIA.

Just like a woman: perfectly senseless in every conclusion!

SONIA.

I only mean that when there is so much written it is impossible to know anything really.

VOLODIA.

But everybody has brains given him to find out where the truth is.

MISHA.

Then if everybody has got brains he can reason things out for himself.

VOLODIA.

So that's how you reason with your large supply of brains! Please go somewhere else and leave me alone to work.

ON REPENTANCE

VOLIA, *a boy of eight, stands in the passage with an empty plate and cries.* FEDIA, *a boy of ten, comes running into the passage.*

FEDIA.

Mother sent me to see where you were; but what are you crying for? Have you brought nurse . . . (*Sees the empty plate, and whistles.*) Where is the cake?

VOLIA.

I — I — I wanted it, I — (*and then suddenly*) — Boo-hoo-hoo! All of a sudden I ate it up — without meaning to.

FEDIA.

Instead of taking it to nurse, you have eaten it yourself on the way! Well I never! Mother thought you wanted nurse to have the cake.

VOLIA.

I did (*and then suddenly, without meaning to*). — Boo-hoo-hoo!

FEDIA.

You just tasted it, and then you ate the whole of it. Well, I never! (*Laughs.*)

VOLIA.

It is all very well for you to laugh, but how am I going to tell. . . . Now I can't go to nurse — or to mother either.

FEDIA.

A nice mess you have made of it, I must say. Ha, ha! So you have eaten the whole cake? It is no use crying. Just try to think of some way of getting out of it.

VOLIA.

I can't see how I can. What shall I do?

FEDIA.

Fancy that! (*Trying to restrain himself from laughing. A pause.*)

VOLIA.

What am I to do now? I am lost. (*Howls.*)

FEDIA.

Don't you care. Stop that howling. Simply go to mother and tell her you have eaten the cake yourself.

VOLIA.

That is worse.

FEDIA.

Then go and confess to nurse.

VOLIA.

How can I?

FEDIA.

Listen; you wait here. I will find nurse and tell her. She won't mind.

VOLIA.

No, don't. I cannot let her know about it.

FEDIA.

Nonsense. You did it by mistake; it can't be helped. I will tell her in a minute. (*Runs away.*)

VOLIA.

Fedia, Fedia, wait! He is gone — I just tasted it, and then I don't remember how I did it. What am I to do now! (*Sobbing.*)

FEDIA.

(*comes running back.*) Stop your bawling, I say. I told you nurse would forgive you. She only said, "Oh, the darling!"

VOLIA.

She is not cross with me?

FEDIA.

Not a bit. She said, "I don't care for the cake; I would have given it to him anyhow."

VOLIA.

But I didn't mean to eat it. (*Cries again.*)

FEDIA.

Why are you crying again? We won't tell mother. Nurse has quite forgiven you.

VOLIA.

Nurse has forgiven me. I know she is kind and good. But me, I am a wicked boy, and that's what makes me cry.

ON ART

FOOTMAN; HOUSEKEEPER; NATASHA (*a little girl.*)

FOOTMAN.

(*with a tray.*) Almond milk for the tea, and rum —

HOUSEKEEPER.

(*knitting a stocking and counting the stitches.*) Twenty-three, twenty-four —

FOOTMAN.

I say, Avdotia Vasilievna, can't you hear?

HOUSEKEEPER.

I hear, I hear. I'll give it to you presently. I can't tear myself to pieces to do all kinds of work at the same moment. (*To* NATASHA.) Yes, darling; I will bring you the prunes presently. Just wait a moment, till I have given him the milk. (*Strains the almond milk.*)

FOOTMAN.

(*sitting down.*) I tell you I have seen something

to-night. To think that they pay good money for that!

HOUSEKEEPER.

Oh, you have been to the theatre. You were out late to-night.

FOOTMAN.

An opera is always a long affair. I have always to wait hours and hours. To-night they were kind, and let me in to see the performance.

(*The kitchen-maid, the manservant* PAVEL *enters with the cream and stands listening.*)

HOUSEKEEPER.

Then there was singing to-night?

FOOTMAN.

Singing — humph! Just silly, loud screaming, not a bit like real singing. "I," he said — "I love her so much." And he puts it all to a tune, and it is not like anything under heaven. Then they had a row, and ought to have fought it out; but they started singing instead.

HOUSEKEEPER.

And yet I've heard it costs a lot to get seats for the season.

FOOTMAN.

Our box cost three hundred roubles for twelve nights.

PAVEL.

(*shaking his head.*) Three hundred! And who does that money go to?

FOOTMAN.

Why, the people who sing are paid for it. I was told a lady singer makes fifty thousand a year.

PAVEL.

You talk of thousands — why, three hundred is a pile of money in the country. Some folks toil their whole life long, and can't even get together one hundred.

(NINA, *a schoolgirl, enters the servants' pantry.*)

NINA.

Is Natasha here? Why don't you come? Mother wants you.

NATASHA.

(*munching a prune.*) I am coming.

NINA.

(*to* PAVEL.) What were you saying about a hundred roubles?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Simeon (*pointing to the footman*) was just telling us about the singing he listened to to-night in the theatre, and about the lady singers being paid such a lot of money. That's what made Pavel wonder. Is that really true, Nina Mikhailovna, that a lady may get fifty thousand for her singing?

NINA.

More than that. A lady has been engaged to sing in America for a hundred and fifty thousand roubles. But even better than that, yesterday's paper says a musician has been paid fifty thousand roubles for his finger-nail.

PAVEL.

The papers write all sorts of nonsense. That couldn't be. How could he be paid that?

NINA.

(*evidently pleased.*) He was, I tell you.

PAVEL.

Just for a finger-nail?

NATASHA.

How is that possible?

NINA.

He was a pianist, and was insured for that amount in case anything happened to his hand, and he couldn't go on playing the piano.

PAVEL.

Well, I'll be blowed!

SENICHKA.

(*a schoolboy in the upper class of the school, entering the pantry.*) You've got a regular meeting here. What is it all about?

(NINA *tells him what they have been talking about.*)

SENICHKA.

(*with still more complacency than* NINA.) That story of the nail is nothing at all. Why, a dancer in Paris had her foot insured for two hundred thousand roubles, in case she sprained it and was not able to go on dancing.

FOOTMAN.

That's them girls — excuse me for mentioning it — that work with their legs without any stockings on.

PAVEL.

You call that work! And they are paid for it!

SENICHKA.

But every one cannot do that kind of work — and she had to study a good many years.

PAVEL.

What did she study that did any good? Mere hopping about?

SENICHKA.

You don't understand. Art is a great thing.

PAVEL.

I think it is all nonsense. People spend money like that because they have such an easy time. If they had to bend their backs as we do to make a living, there wouldn't be all these singing and dancing girls. They ain't worth anything — but what is the use of saying so?

SENICHKA.

There we have the outcome of ignorance. To him Beethoven and Viardot and Rafael are utter folly.

NATASHA.

Well, I think what he says is so.

NINA.

Come, let's go.

ON SCIENCE

Two schoolboys, one a pupil of the real gymnasium and the other of the classical gymnasium; two twins, brothers of the latter;* VOLODIA *and* PETRUSHA, *eight years of age.*

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

What do I want with Latin and Greek, when everything of any value has been translated into the modern languages?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

You will never understand the *Iliad* unless you read it in Greek.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

But I don't see the use of reading it. I don't want to.

VOLODIA.

What is the *Iliad?*

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

A story.

* A school for natural science without Greek and Latin; in the classical gymnasium Latin and Greek are taught.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Yes, a story, but one that has not its equal in the world.

PETRUSHA.

What is it that makes the story so particularly good?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Nothing. It is just a story, and nothing else.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Yes; but you cannot really understand antiquity without a knowledge of this story.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

I consider that a superstition just like religious instruction.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

(*getting excited.*) Religious instruction is nothing but lies and nonsense, while this is history and wisdom.

VOLODIA.

Is religious instruction all nonsense?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Why do you sit there listening to our talk? You can't understand.

BOTH BOYS.

(*hurt.*) Why shouldn't we?

VOLODIA.

Perhaps we understand things better than you do.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Very well. Just be quiet, and don't interrupt. (*To the* SCIENCE SCHOLAR.) You say Latin and Greek is of no use in life: but that applies as well to bacteriology, to chemistry, to physics, and astronomy. Why is it necessary to know anything about the distance of the stars, about their size, and all those unnecessary details?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Unnecessary? On the contrary, they are very necessary indeed.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

What for?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Why, for everything. Take navigation. You would think that had not much to do with astronomy. But look at the practical results of science — the way it is applied to agriculture, to medicine, to the industries —

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

On the other hand, it is used also in making bombs, for purposes of war, and for revolutionary

objects as well. If science contributed to the moral improvement, then —

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

But what about your sort of knowledge? Does that raise the moral standard?

VOLODIA.

Is there any science that makes people better?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

I told you not to interfere in the discussions of grown-up people. You say nothing but silly things.

VOLODIA *and* PETRUSHA.

(*with one voice.*) Not so silly as you imagine. . . . Just tell us which science teaches people how to be good.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

There isn't such a science. Everybody has to find that out for himself.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

What is the use of talking to them? They don't understand.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Why not? They might. How to be good, Volodia and Petrusha, is not taught in schools.

VOLODIA.

Well, if that is not taught, it is no use going to school.

PETRUSHA.

When we are grown up we will not learn useless things.

VOLODIA.

As for the right way to live, we'll do that better than you.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

(*laughing.*) Oh, the wisdom of that conclusion!

ON GOING TO LAW

A PEASANT, HIS WIFE, A KINSWOMAN, FEDIA, *the peasant's son, a lad of nineteen.* PETKA, *another son, a boy of nine.*

FATHER.

(*entering the cottage and taking off his cloak.*) What beastly weather! I could hardly manage to get home.

MOTHER.

And such a long way for you. It must be nearly fifteen miles.

FATHER.

Not less than twenty, I can tell you. (*To his son,* FEDIA.) Take the colt to the stable.

MOTHER.

Well, have we won?

PEASANT.

We have not, damn it all. It will never come right.

KINSWOMAN.

But what is it all about, cousin? I don't quite understand.

PEASANT.

It is simply that Averian has taken possession of my vegetable garden and is holding it. And I can't get at him in the right way.

WIFE.

That lawsuit has been dragging along over a year now.

KINSWOMAN.

I know, I know. I remember as far back as Lent, when the matter was before the village court. My man told me it had been settled in your favour.

PEASANT.

That finished it, didn't it? But Averian appealed to the head of the Zemstvo,* and he had the whole business gone into again. I then appealed to the judge and won. That ought to have been the end of it. But it wasn't. After that he won. Nice sort of judges they are!

WIFE.

What are we to do now?

* County council.

PEASANT.

I won't stand his having my property. I will appeal to the higher court, I have already had a talk with a lawyer.

KINSWOMAN.

But suppose they take his side in the upper court?

PEASANT.

Then I'll go to the Supreme Court. I'll sell my last cow before I'll give in to that fat hound. I'll teach him a lesson.

KINSWOMAN.

A lot of trouble comes from these trials, a lot of trouble, I declare! And suppose he wins again?

PEASANT.

Then I'll appeal to the Tsar. Now I had better go out and give the pony some hay. (*Exit.*)

PETKA.

Why do they judge like that, some saying Averian is right and some daddy?

MOTHER.

Probably because they don't know who is right themselves.

PETKA.

Then why ask them, if they don't know?

MOTHER.

Because nobody wants to give up his property.

PETKA.

When I grow up, I will do like this: If I have a dispute with somebody, we will cast lots and see who wins. And that will settle it. We always settle it this way with Akulika.

KINSWOMAN.

Don't you think, cousin, that is quite a good way? One sin less, anyhow.

MOTHER.

Quite so. What a lot we have spent on that trial! More than the whole vegetable garden is worth. Oh, it is a sin, a great sin!

ON THE CRIMINAL COURT

Children: GRISHKA, SEMKA, JISHKA.

JISHKA.

Serves him right. Why did he make his way into another person's corn loft? When he is put in prison that will teach him not to do it another time.

SEMKA.

Of course if he has really done it. But old Mikita said Mitrofan was run into prison without being guilty.

JISHKA.

Without being guilty? And won't anything happen to the man who judged him falsely?

GRISHKA.

Well, they won't pat him on the head for it, of course. If he hasn't judged according to law he will be punished too.

SEMKA.

Who will punish him?

JISHKA.

Those above him.

SEMKA.

Who are above him?

GRISHKA.

His superiors.

JISHKA.

And if the superiors also make a mistake?

GRISHKA.

There are higher powers above them, and they will be punished by these. That's what the Tsar is for.

JISHKA.

But if the Tsar judges wrong, who is going to punish him?

GRISHKA.

Who? Why do you ask that? Don't you know?

SEMKA.

God will punish him.

JISHKA.

God will also punish him who stole the corn from the loft. Then why not leave it to God to

punish those who are guilty? He will not judge wrong.

GRISHKA.

It's clear that that is not possible.

JISHKA.

Why not?

GRISHKA.

Because . . .

ON PROPERTY

An old carpenter is mending the railings on a veranda. A boy of seven, the son of the master of the house, is watching the man working.

BOY.

How well you work! What is your name?

CARPENTER.

My name? They used to call me Hrolka, and now they call me Hrol, and even Hrol Savich* when they speak respectfully.

BOY.

How well you work, Frol Savich.

CARPENTER.

As long as you have to work, you may as well do good work.

BOY.

Have you got a veranda in your house?

* The name is *Frol,* but the common way of the ignorant masses is to use *H,* instead of *F.* It is as if one said Johnny then John and then John Smith.

CARPENTER.

In our house? We have a veranda, my boy, yours here is nothing to compare with it. A veranda with no windows. And if you step on to it, well, you can't believe your eyes. That's the kind of veranda we've got.

BOY.

You are making fun. No, seriously, tell me: have you a veranda like this? I want to know.

CARPENTER.

My dear child, how can the likes of us have a veranda? It's a blessing if we've a roof over our heads, and you say, "a veranda!" I've been thinking about having a roof built ever since last spring. I've just managed to pull down the old one, but the new one isn't finished, and the house is standing there and getting damp without it.

BOY.

(*surprised.*) But why?

CARPENTER.

Why? Just because I am not able to do it.

BOY.

How so? If you are able to work for us?

CARPENTER.

I can work all right for you, but not for myself.

BOY.

Why? I can't understand. Please explain.

CARPENTER.

You will understand when you are grown up. I am able to do your work, but as for my own, I can't do it.

BOY.

But why?

CARPENTER.

Because I need wood for that, and I haven't got any. It has to be bought. I have nothing to buy it with. When I have finished my work here, and your mother pays me, just you tell her to pay me well. Then I'll drive to the forest, get five ash-trees or so to bring home and finish my roof.

BOY.

Do you mean you haven't a forest of your own?

CARPENTER.

We have such big forests that you can walk three whole days and not reach the end. But, worse luck, they don't belong to us.

BOY.

Mother says all her trouble comes from our forest; she has continual worries about it.

CARPENTER.

That's the worst of it. Your mother is worried by having too much wood, and I'm worried by having none at all. But here I am gabbling with you and forgetting my work. And the likes of us don't get made much of for doing that.

(*Resumes his work.*)

BOY.

When I grow up I shall arrange to have just the same as everybody else, so that all of us are equal.

CARPENTER.

Mind you grow up quickly, that I may still be alive. Then, mind you, don't forget. . . . Where have I put my plane?

ON CHILDREN

A LADY *with her children — a* SCHOOLBOY *of fourteen, a girl of five,* JANICHKA, *are walking in the garden. An* OLD PEASANT WOMAN *approaches them.*

LADY.

What do you want, Matresha?

OLD WOMAN.

I have come again to ask a favour of your ladyship.

LADY.

What is it?

OLD WOMAN.

I am simply ashamed to speak, your ladyship, but that don't help. My daughter, the one for whom you stood godmother, has got another baby. God has given her a boy this time. She sent me to ask your ladyship if you would do her a favour, and have the child christened into our Orthodox faith.*

* When a lady in Russia stands godmother she gives the christening robes and a dress to the mother. The godfather pays the priest and gives his godchild a cross.

LADY.

But didn't she have a child very recently?

OLD WOMAN.

Well, that's just as you think. A year ago in Lent.

LADY.

How many grandchildren have you got now?

OLD WOMAN.

I could hardly tell you, dear lady. All of them are still babes. Such a misfortune!

LADY.

How many children has your daughter?

OLD WOMAN.

This is the seventh child, your ladyship, and all alive. I wish God had taken some back to Him.

LADY.

How can you speak like that?

OLD WOMAN.

I can't help it. That's how one comes to sin. But then our misery is so great. Well, your ladyship, are you willing to help us, and stand godmother to the child? Believe me, on my soul,

lady, we have not even got anything to pay the priest; bread itself is scarce in the house. All the children are small. My son-in-law is working away from home, and I am alone with my daughter. I am old, and she is expecting or nursing the whole time, and what work can you ask her to do with all that? So it is me that has to do everything. And that hungry lot all the while asking for food.

LADY.

Are there really seven children?

OLD WOMAN.

Seven, your ladyship, sure. Just the eldest girl begins to help a bit; all the rest are little.

LADY.

But why do they have such a lot of children?

OLD WOMAN.

How can one help that, dear lady? He comes now and then for a short stay, or just for a feast day. They are young, and he lives near in town. I wish he had to go somewhere far away.

LADY.

That's the way! Some people are sad because

they have no children, or their children die, and you complain of having too many.

OLD WOMAN.

They are too many. We have not the means to keep them. Well, your ladyship, may I cheer her up with your consent?

LADY.

Well, I will stand godmother to this one like the others. It is a boy, you say?

OLD WOMAN.

It's a small baby, but very strong; he's got good lungs. What day do you order the christening to be?

LADY.

Whenever you like.

(OLD WOMAN *thanks her and goes.*)

JANICHKA.

Mother, why is it that some people have children and some have not? You have, Matresha, has, but Parasha hasn't any.

LADY.

Parasha is not married. People have children when they are married. They marry, become husband and wife, and then only children come.

JANICHKA.

Do they always get children then?

LADY.

No, not always. Our cook has a wife, but they have no children.

JANICHKA.

Couldn't it be arranged that only those who want children should have them, and those who don't want them should have none?

SCHOOLBOY.

What nonsense you talk!

JANICHKA.

That is not nonsense at all. I only thought that if Matresha's daughter doesn't want to have children, it ought to be arranged so that she shouldn't have any. Couldn't it be arranged, mother?

SCHOOLBOY.

Have I not told you not to talk nonsense about things you know nothing about?

JANICHKA.

Mother, could it be arranged as I say?

LADY.

I don't know: we never know about that. It all depends on the will of God.

JANICHKA.

But how do children come into the world?

SCHOOLBOY.

The goat brings them.

JANICHKA.

(*hurt.*) Why do you tease me? I don't see anything to laugh at in what I am saying. But I do think that since Matresha says they are worse off for having children, it ought to be managed so that no children should be born to her. There is Nurse who has none.

LADY.

But she is not married.

JANICHKA.

Then all those that do not care for children ought not to marry. As it is now, children are born and people have nothing to feed them with. (*The mother exchanges a glance with her son, and does not answer.*) When I am grown up I will marry by all means, and I shall see that I have one girl and one boy, and no more. Do you think it is nice when children are born and people don't care for them? As for mine, I shall love them dearly. Don't you think so, mother? I will go and ask Nurse. (*Exit.*)

LADY.

(*to her son.*) Yes, truth flows from the lips of children. What she says is a great truth. If people would understand how serious marriage is, instead of regarding it as amusement — if they would marry not for their own sake, but for the sake of the children — then all these horrors would not exist. There would be no children suffering from neglect or distress, nor would such cases happen as that of Matresha's daughter, where children bring sorrow in place of joy.

ON EDUCATION.

The YARD PORTER *is cleaning the handles of the doors.* KATIA, *a girl of seven, is building a house with blocks.* NICHOLAS, *a schoolboy of fifteen, enters with a book and throws it angrily on the floor.*

NICHOLAS.

To the devil with that damned school!

PORTER.

What is the matter with it?

NICHOLAS.

Again a bad mark. That means more new trouble. Damn it all! What do I want their cursed geography for? California — why is it necessary to know about California?

PORTER.

What will they do to you?

NICHOLAS.

They will keep me another year in that same old class.

PORTER.

Then why don't you learn your lessons?

NICHOLAS.

Why? Because I can't learn the stupid things. Damn it all! (*Throwing himself on a chair.*) I'll go and tell mother. I'll tell her I can't do it. Let them do whatever they like but I can't do it. And if after that she doesn't take me out of school I will run away from home. I swear I will.

PORTER.

But where will you go?

NICHOLAS.

Just away. I will look out for a place as a coachman, or a yard porter. Anything is better than having to learn that cursed nonsense.

PORTER.

But to be a yard porter is not an easy job either, I can tell you. A porter has to get up early, chop wood, carry it in, make fires —

NICHOLAS.

Whew! (*Whistles.*) But that is like a holiday. I love chopping wood. I simply adore it. No, that would not stop me. No, you just try what it is to learn geography.

PORTER.

You're right there. But why do you learn it? What use is it to you? Is it that they make you do it?

NICHOLAS.

I wish I knew why. It is of no use whatever. But that's the rule. They think one cannot do without it.

PORTER.

I dare say it is necessary for you in order to become an official, to get honours, high appointments, like your father and uncle.

NICHOLAS.

But since I don't care for all that.

KATIA.

Since he does not care!

(*Enter* MOTHER, *with a letter in her hand.*)

MOTHER.

I have just heard from the director of the school that you have got a bad mark again. That won't do, Nikolenka. It must be one thing or the other: learn or not learn.

NICHOLAS.

I'll stick to the one: I cannot, I cannot, I can-

not learn. For God's sake, let me go. I cannot learn.

MOTHER.

You cannot learn?

NICHOLAS.

I cannot. It won't get into my head.

MOTHER.

That is because your head is full of nonsense. Don't think about all your stupid things, but concentrate your mind on the lessons you have to learn.

NICHOLAS.

Mother, I am talking seriously. Take me away from school. I wish for nothing else in the world but to get rid of that dreadful school, of that treadmill! I can't stand it.

MOTHER.

But what would you do out of school?

NICHOLAS.

That is my own business.

MOTHER.

It is not your own business, but mine. I have to answer to God for you. I must give you an education.

NICHOLAS.

But since I cannot.

MOTHER.

(*severely.*) What nonsense to say you cannot. For the last time, I will speak to you like a mother. I beseech you to mend your ways and to do what is required of you. If you will not obey me this time I shall take other measures.

NICHOLAS.

I tell you, I cannot and I will not learn.

MOTHER.

Take care, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS.

Why should I take care? Why do you torture me? Don't you see you do!

MOTHER.

I forbid you to speak like that. How dare you! Go away! You will see —

NICHOLAS.

Very well—I *will* go. I am not afraid of whatever comes, and I don't want anything from you. (*Dashes out of the room and bangs the door.*)

MOTHER.

(*to herself.*) How unhappy he makes me. I know exactly how it has all come about. It is all because he does not think about the things he ought to do, and his head is full of nothing but his own stupid interests, his dogs, and his hens.

KATIA.

But, mother, you remember the tale you told me: how impossible it is not to think about the white polar bear when you are told not to.

MOTHER.

I am not speaking of that; I say a boy has to learn when he is told to.

KATIA.

But he says he cannot.

MOTHER.

That's nonsense.

KATIA.

But he does not say he is not willing to do any work whatever. He only objects to learning geography. He wants to work, to be a coachman, a yard-porter.

MOTHER.

If he had been a yard-porter's son he might

become one himself. But being your father's son he must learn.

KATIA.

But he does not want to.

MOTHER.

Whether he wants to or not he must obey.

KATIA.

And if he simply cannot learn?

MOTHER.

Take care that you are not like him yourself.

KATIA.

That's just what I want to be. I shall not, on any condition, learn what I do not wish to.

MOTHER.

Then you will grow up a fool.

KATIA.

And when I am grown up, and have children, I will never compel them to learn. If they want to they may learn, if not, let them do without learning.

MOTHER.

When you are grown up, you will be sure to have changed your mind.

KATIA.

I shall certainly not.

MOTHER.

You will.

KATIA.

No, I shall not, I shall not.

MOTHER.

Then you will be a fool.

KATIA.

Nurse says God wants fools also.

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE HERMIT, FEDOR KUSMICH

THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE HERMIT, FEDOR KUSMICH

THERE were strange tales about the old hermit, Fedor Kusmich, who appeared in Siberia in the year 1836, and lived there in various places during the space of twenty-seven years. Even before he died it used to be said of him that he concealed his indentity — that he was no other than the Emperor Alexander I., but after his death these tales spread and came to be more firmly believed. That he positively was Alexander I. was considered a fact not only among the commoner people, but also in the highest circles; and even in the royal family in Alexander III.'s lifetime. It was also believed by the learned historian, Shilder, who wrote a history of his reign.

The incidents which gave rise to these rumours were, firstly, that the Emperor died quite suddenly without any serious illness; secondly, that it happened away from everybody in the obscure town of Vaganrog; thirdly, it was declared by those who had chanced to see him in his coffin that he had changed to such an extent as to be hardly

recognisable, and was in consequence kept covered and not shown to any one; fourthly, he was known to have both said and written a great many times, especially in his later years, that he desired nothing better than to give up his throne and retire from the world. A fifth circumstance, about which very little is known, is the fact that in the official record describing his body, it was stated that the whole of his back was covered with black and blue marks, a thing hardly credible on the Emperor's delicate skin.

The reasons why Kusmich in particular was believed to be the Emperor in hiding, were first of all, that in height, build, and appearance he was so much like the monarch. Everybody (even the palace servants) who had seen Alexander I. and his portraits, was struck by the great resemblance between him and the old man, both in regard to age and the characteristic stoop. Secondly, although Kusmich passed as a nameless tramp, he was nevertheless familiar with foreign languages, and in his bearing there was a certain majestic courtesy betokening a man accustomed to the highest positon. Thirdly, he never revealed his identity to any one, but from certain expressions that escaped him unawares, it could plainly be seen that he was a man who had once ranked high above others. Fourthly, he had destroyed all his

papers, of which but one page remained, bearing a mysterious sign and the initials A. P. Lastly, in spite of his great piety, the old man never went to confession. When the bishop, during his visit, tried to induce him to fulfil this duty which was enjoined by the Church, Kusmich said, "If I refrained from telling the truth about myself in confession, I should astonish all in heaven; if I disclosed who I was, I should astonish all on earth."

All these doubts and conjectures were cleared up by the discovery of the old man's diary, which begins as follows: —

I

God bless my dearest friend, Ivan Gregorievich, for this delightful retreat. I am not worthy of his kindness, nor of God's mercy. Here I am at peace. There are less people to disturb me, and I am left alone with the recollections of my past wickedness and with my Maker. I will take advantage of this solitude to relate the whole story of my life. It may prove a warning to others.

For forty-seven years I lived amidst the most terrible temptations, and not only made no attempt to resist them, but abandoned myself to them — I sinned and made others sin. At last the Lord had mercy on me. The loathsomeness of my

life was revealed to me in all its horrors, and He delivered me from evil; if not wholly, at any rate from active participation in it. What inner anguish I went through, and what took place in my soul when I realised my transgressions and felt the need of atonement, not merely by faith but by deeds and by suffering, I will relate in due course. I will now describe the way in which I escaped from my position, leaving in my place the corpse of a soldier, who had been tortured to death in my name, and then proceed to relate my whole story from the very beginning.

It happened like this: In Vaganrog I continued the same life of dissipation I had been leading for the past twenty-four years. I am the greatest of all criminals. I murdered my own father; I caused the death of hundreds of thousands of men in wars of my making. I am a base libertine, a mean wretch, who believed in other people's flatteries, and who considered myself the saviour of Europe, a benefactor of mankind, a model of perfection, *un heureux hasard,* as I once said to Madame Stahl. But in spite of it all, the Lord in His mercy did not quite forsake me, and the ever watchful voice of conscience gave me no rest. It seemed to me that everything and everybody were wrong; I only was right, and every one failed to see it. I turned to God. At first, with Fotey's

help, I prayed to the God of the Orthodox Church; then I turned to the Catholic; then to the Protestant with Parrot; then to the god of the Mystics with Krudener; but I only prayed that others might see and be filled with admiration of me. I used to despise everybody, yet the opinion of the very people I despised was the one thing of importance to me — the only thing for which I lived, and which guided all my actions. It was terrible to be left alone. Still more terrible to be alone with her — with my wife. Consumptive, narrow-minded, deceitful, capricious, spiteful, hypocritical, she did more to poison my life than anything else. *Nous étions censés* to spend our new *lune de miel,* a very hell clothed in decent garb, too horrible to think of.

I felt particularly wretched on one occasion. I had received a letter from Arakcheev the night before, in which he informed me about the assassination of his mistress, and spoke of his utter grief and despair. Strange to say, in spite of his constant subtle flattery, I liked him. It was not altogether flattery, perhaps, but a real dog-like devotion, which began even in my father's time, when we both took the oath of allegiance to him unknown to my grandmother. This devotion of his made me love him — if I loved any man at that time — although the word love can hardly be used

in connection with such a monster. What drew me to him particularly was the fact that not only had he no hand in my father's death, as so many others had who became hateful to me afterwards as accomplices in my crime, but he had been devoted alike to him and to me. However, of this later.

Strange to say, the murder of the beautiful, wicked Nastasia — she was a sensuous beauty — had the effect of arousing all my desires so that I could not sleep the whole night. The fact that my consumptive wife, whom I loathed, was lying in the room next but one to me, coupled with thoughts of Mary Narishkin, who had thrown me over for an insignificant diplomat, vexed and tormented me still more. Both my father and I seemed to have been doomed to be jealous of the Gagarins. But I was carried away again. I could not sleep the whole of that night. With the first signs of dawn I pulled up my blind, slipped on a white dressing-gown, and rang for my valet. Every one was still asleep. I dressed, put on a civilian overcoat and cap, and went out past the sentinels into the street.

It was a cool, autumn morning, the sun was just rising over the sea. I felt revived in the fresh air, and my depressing thoughts left me. I turned my steps towards the sea. The first rays of the

rising sun were dancing about on its surface. I had barely reached the green-coloured house at the corner when I was attracted by sounds of drumming and piping from the square. I listened for a moment, and guessed that a punishment was going on, that some one was running the gauntlet. I had frequently sanctioned this form of punishment, but had never seen it before. All at once, as though at the instigation of Satan himself, a picture rose up in my mind of the beautiful Nastasia who had been murdered, and of the soldier's body as it was being lashed with sticks, the two mingling together in one maddening sensation. I tried to recall this punishment in the Semijonov regiment, amongst the military settlers, hundreds of whom had been flogged to death in this way, and was suddenly seized by an overwhelming desire to witness this sight. As I was in civilian garb, it was quite possible for me to do so. The beating of the drum and the sound of the pipes grew louder as I drew nearer the square. Being short-sighted, I could not see very well without my glasses, but I could just make out a tall figure with a white back, marching along between two rows of soldiers. When I joined the crowd standing behind, I got out my glasses, and could see everything that was going on distinctly. A tall man with his bare arms tied to a bayonet, his bare

back — on which the blood was beginning to show itself — slightly bent, was walking down an avenue of soldiers armed with sticks. This man was the image of myself — my double! The same height, stooping shoulders, bald head, the same kind of whiskers without a moustache, the same cheek-bones, mouth, and blue eyes. But there was no smile on those lips that opened and contorted with pain at the blows, no tender, caressing expression in those eyes that protruded horribly, now closing, now opening.

I recognised him at once. It was Strumensky, a corporal in the third company of the Semijonov regiment, well known to the guards by his likeness to me. They used to call him Alexander II. in fun. I knew that he had been transferred to the garrison, together with some other rebels, and had most likely tried to escape or something of the sort, and having been caught, was undergoing punishment. I confirmed this afterwards. I stood as one petrified, gazing at the unfortunate man, as he was marching along under the blows. Suddenly I noticed that the crowd was staring at me, some people stepping aside, others approaching nearer. I had evidently been recognised; I turned my steps quickly homewards. The drumming and piping continued, so I gathered that the flogging was not yet over.

My first sensation on getting away was that my sympathies ought to be on the side of those who were inflicting the punishment; at any rate, that I ought to acknowledge that what they were doing was right, good, and necessary. But I could not do this, and was at the same time conscious that if I did not acknowledge it, I must admit that my whole life had been wrong from beginning to end, and that I ought to do what I had long ago wanted to do — throw up everything, go away, and disappear.

I was completely overwhelmed by this sensation. I tried to fight against it, now assuring myself that the thing was right, a grievous necessity that could not be dispensed with; now feeling that I ought to be in the unfortunate man's place. Strange to say, I did not pity the man in the least. Instead of doing anything to stop the proceeding, I hastened home merely to avoid recognition. Soon the drumming ceased, and the disturbing sensation somehow left me. I had some tea on reaching home, and received Volkonsky with his report. Then there was breakfast, the usual burdensome, insincere relations with my wife; then Dibich, and another report dealing with certain informations about a secret society. With God's grace I will deal with this more fully in its proper place. I will merely say now that I received the informa-

tion with outward composure. I continued in a more or less calm state until dinner came to an end, when I went into my study, lay down on the couch, and dozed off. I had scarcely been asleep for five minutes when I was suddenly awakened by a powerful shock. I distinctly heard the beating of the drum, the sound of the pipes and Strumensky's cries. I saw his agonised face, or mine — I was not quite sure which; whether it was Strumensky or myself — and the grim contorted faces of the soldiers and officers. I remained in this trance for a short time, and when I came to myself put on my hat and sword, and went out saying that I was going for a walk. I knew where the military hospital was situated, and directed my steps straight there. My appearance caused a great tumult as usual. The chief doctor and head of the staff came running up breathless. I told them that I wished to inspect the wards. On my round I caught sight of Strumensky's bald head in the second ward. He was lying face downwards, his head resting on his arm, moaning pitifully. "He's been punished for desertion," some one said to me.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, with my usual gesture of approval, and walked on.

The next day I sent a messenger to ask how he was, and learnt that he had received the sacrament and was dying.

It was my brother Michael's name-day; there was a special service and parade. I feigned to be unwell, as a result of my recent journey from the Crimea, and did not go to church. Dibich came again and continued his report about the conspiracy in the second army. He drew my attention to what Count Vitt had said before my Crimean visit, and to the information that had been received from Corporal Sherwood. Whilst listening to Dibich, and seeing the immense importance he attached to these plots and conspiracies, I was suddenly struck by the full significance of the revolution that had taken place within me. All these people were conspiring to change the form of government, to set up a constitution, the very thing I had myself wanted to do twenty years ago. I had made and unmade constitutions in Europe, but was there one soul the better for it? What right had I to take such a task upon myself? In reality external life, external affairs and participation in them were unimportant, unnecessary, and had nothing whatever to do with me. Had I not participated in them to the full, changed the fates of European nations? I suddenly realised that this did not concern me, that the only thing of importance to me, was myself — my soul. My former ideas about abdication came back to me with new force. This time it was without any affectation, without any desire to grieve others,

to astonish the world, or to add to my own aggrandisement — all the things that had prompted me formerly; but it was with a real sincerity, not for the sake of impressing others, but for myself — for the needs of my own soul. It seemed as if I had gone through my brilliant career (in the worldly sense of course), in order to return to that dream of my youth, which had reached me through penitence. I had come back to it with no feeling of vanity or desire for self glorification; it was for my true self alone, for God. In my youth the idea had not been quite clear to me, but now it seemed to me impossible to go on living as I had been doing. Nevertheless how could I escape? I no longer wished to astonish the world, but on the contrary wanted to go away quietly, unknown to any one — to go away and suffer. I was so filled with joy at the idea that I began considering ways and means of accomplishing it, and used all the resources of my mind and my peculiar subtleness to bring it about. Curiously enough it was not nearly so difficult as I had anticipated. My plan was to feign a dangerous illness, bribe the doctor, get Strumensky, who was dying, put in my place, and flee without disclosing my identity to any one.

Everything turned out favourably. On the 9th, by some peculiar fate, I fell ill of a fever. I

stayed in bed for about a week, during which time I considered my idea thoroughly, and became more confirmed in it. On the 16th I got up feeling quite well again.

I shaved as usual on that day and cut myself rather badly. I bled a great deal, and feeling faint dropped down on the floor. People came rushing in, and I was immediately raised. I could see at a glance that the incident might prove useful to my purpose, and though I had quite recovered, pretended to be very weak, and going back to bed and asked for Doctor Villier's assistant. I knew it would have been impossible to bribe Villier, but I had hopes of his assistant. I told him of my purpose and offered him eighty thousand roubles, if he would do everything I wanted of him.

I had hit on the following plan, having heard that Strumensky was not expected to live through the day, I pretended to be irritated and annoyed with everybody, and allowed no one to come near me except the young doctor, whom I had bribed. He was to bring Strumensky's body hidden in a bath, put him in my place, and announce my sudden death. It all happened as we had arranged it, and on the 7th day of November I was a free man.

Strumensky's body was buried in great state.

My brother Nicholas came to the throne, condemning the conspirators to hard labour. I met several of them later in Siberia. I have suffered very little in comparison to the enormity of my crime, and have enjoyed the greatest of all happiness. But I will speak of this in due course.

An old man of seventy-two, on the brink of the grave, fully realising the vanity of my former life and the deep significance of my present one as a wanderer, I will now endeavour to relate the whole story of the past.

II

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

December 12, 1849,
Near Krasnorechinsk, Siberia.

To-day is my birthday. I have reached my seventy-second year. Exactly seventy-two years ago I was born in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. My mother, the Empress, was then the Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna.

I slept well last night, and feel better than I did yesterday. I have come out of my spiritual torpor and can turn once more to God. During the night I prayed in the darkness, and a consciousness came upon me that my one and only purpose in

life was to serve Him who had sent me into the world.

It is within my own power either to serve or not to serve Him. Serving Him I add to my own good and to the good of the whole world; not serving Him I forfeit my own good, and deprive the world of that good which was in my power to create; not, however, of its potential good. What I ought to have done, others will do after me, and His will shall be fulfilled. This is the meaning of free will. But if He knows everything that is to be, if all is ordained by Him, then how can there be free will? I do not know. This is the boundary of thought and the beginning of prayer. Let Thy will be done, O Lord. Help us. Come and dwell within us. Or more simply: Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us, and forgive us our sins! Words fail me, O Lord, but Thou knowest what is in my heart, for Thou dwellest in it. And so I fell asleep. I was restless as usual, woke up several times, and had bad dreams. I seemed to be swimming in the sea, and wondering how it was that I lay so high above the water; why the water did not cover me. The sea was a beautiful green, and some people seemed to be in my way.

I wanted to come out of the water, but could

not, because several women were standing on the shore and I was naked. I took the dream to mean that the power of the flesh was strong within me, standing in my way, but deliverance was close at hand. I got up before dawn, struck a flint, but could not light the tinder for a long time, after which, putting on my dressing-gown of elk skin, I went out into the fresh air. The rosy orange glow of the rising sun could be seen behind the snow-clad pines and larches. I brought in the wood which I chopped yesterday, lit my stove, and began chopping some more. It grew lighter. I had my breakfast of soaked rusks, shut the damper of the stove as soon as the logs were red, and sat down to write.

I begin again. I was born on 10th December 1777, and was named Alexander by my grandmother's wish, in the hope, as she afterwards told me, that I should become as great as Alexander of Macedonia, and as holy as Alexander Nevsky. I was christened a week after my birth in the big church of the palace. I was carried into the church by the Duchess of Courland on a brocade pillow, whilst a number of other great personages held a cover over me. The Empress was my godmother, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were my godfathers.

My room was arranged according to my grandmother's taste. I can of course remember nothing about it, but have been told by other people. It was a large room with three high windows. A space was portioned off in the middle by four columns, with a velvety canopy overhead fastened to the ceiling, and silk curtains falling to the ground. Under this canopy there was a little iron bedstead with a leather mattress, a little pillow, and a light English blanket. The whole was enclosed by a rail four feet high, so that visitors should not come too close. There was no furniture in the room with the exception of the nurse's bed behind the curtains.

All the details of my physical training were settled by my grandmother. I was not allowed to be rocked, and was swathed in a new way, with the feet left bare. I used to be bathed first in warm then in cold water. My clothes, too, were of a peculiar kind; none of my garments had any seams or fasteners, and were slipped straight over my head. As soon as I was able to crawl, I was put upon the carpet and left to my own devices. I was told that in the early days my grandmother used frequently to sit down beside me on the carpet and play with me. But I have no recollection of it, neither do I remember my nurse.

She was the wife of a gardener at Tsarskoye

Selo, and was called Avdotia Petrova. I saw her again in the garden at Tsarskoye when I was eighteen years old — she came up and told me who she was. It was at the best time of my life, during my first friendship with Chartorisky, when I was filled with disgust at what went on at the two courts — my poor unfortunate father's and my grandmother's. She had made me hate her at that time. I was still a man then, and not a bad man, full of good intentions. I was walking in the garden with Chartorisky, when a neatly-dressed woman came out of one of the side avenues. Her rosy face, wreathed in smiles, was wonderfully kind and pleasant. She came up to me excitedly, and falling down on her knees, seized my hand and began kissing it.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Your Highness! Your Highness! Heaven be praised that I see you again!"

"I was your foster-mother, Avdotia Dunyasha. I nursed you for eleven months. Thank the Lord for this meeting with you!"

I raised her with difficulty, asked where she lived, and promised to go and see her.

The charming interior of her tiny cottage, her sweet daughter, my foster-sister, a perfect Russian beauty, who was engaged to the court riding-master, her husband the gardener, just as smiling as his wife, and their group of little children, all

seemed to light up the darkness surrounding me.

"This is real life, real happiness!" I thought. "How simple it all is, how clear! No envies, intrigues, quarrels!"

This beloved Dunyasha was my foster-mother. My head nurse was a certain Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf, a German; my second nurse was a Miss Hessler, an Englishwoman. Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf was a tall, stout woman, with a pale complexion and straight nose. She had a majestic bearing when in the nursery, but was marvellously small and servile when in the presence of my grandmother, who was about a head shorter than herself. She was obsequious and severe with me at the same time. At one moment she was a queen in her broad skirts and with her haughty countenance; at another she was a cringing, hypocritical serving-maid. Praskovia Ivanovna Hessler was a long-faced, red-haired, serious Englishwoman, but when she smiled, her face shone with radiance, so that it was impossible to keep from smiling with her. I liked her sense of order, her cleanliness, her kindness, and her firmness. She seemed to be possessed of some mysterious knowledge of which neither my mother nor even grandmother herself were aware.

I remember my mother at that time as some supernaturally beautiful vision, mysterious and

sad, gorgeously dressed in silks and laces, and glittering with diamonds. She would come into my room with her bare round white arms and a curiously aloof expression on her face which I did not understand. She would caress me, take me up in those lovely arms of hers, raise me to her still more lovely face, and, shaking back her beautiful thick hair, would kiss me and begin to cry. On one occasion she let me drop out of her arms as she fell to the floor senseless.

Strange to say, I had no sort of love for my mother. Whether it was due to her attitude towards me, or to my grandmother's influence, or because I was able by my childish instinct to see through all the court intrigues centring round me, I am unable to say. There used to be something strained about her manner towards me. She was not really interested in me, but seemed to be displaying me for some end, and I was conscious of this. I was not mistaken, as I learnt later.

My grandmother took me away from my parents and brought me up entirely herself. She intended placing me on the throne instead of my poor unfortunate father, her son, whom she hated. Needless to say, I knew nothing of this at the time, but as soon as I began to notice things I felt myself to be an object of enmity and rivalry, the plaything of conspirators, without knowing the why

or wherefore. I was conscious of every one's utter indifference to me — to my childish heart, that had no need of a crown but rather of love, of which I knew nothing. There was my mother, who was always depressed when she saw me. On one occasion she was talking to Sophia Ivanovna in German, when she heard my grandmother coming; she suddenly burst into tears and ran out of the room. There was my father, who sometimes came to see us and whom we sometimes went to see. This poor unfortunate father of mine showed even greater displeasure on seeing me than my mother. His whole bearing towards me was one of restrained anger. I remember on one occasion how we were taken to their apartments before they set out for their travels abroad in 1781. I happened to be standing next to him, when he suddenly thrust me away, jumped up from his chair with flashing eyes, and gasped out something concerning me and my grandmother. I cannot recall all that he said, but the words *après 62 tout est possible* have remained in my memory. I remember how I got frightened and burst into tears. My mother took me up in her arms and kissed me, then carried me over to him. He gave me his blessing hurriedly and rushed out of the room, his high heels clattering as he went.

It was not until long after that I understood the meaning of this outburst. They set out for their travels under the name of *Comte et Comtesse du Nord.* It was my grandmother's idea that they should go. My father was afraid that in his absence he would be deprived of the right to the throne and that I should be acknowledged as his successor. Good God! he prized that which ruined us both — ruined us bodily and spiritually, and I, unfortunate man, prized it no less than he!

I hear some one knocking at the door and chanting a prayer in the name of Father and Son. Amen. I must put away my papers and go and see who it is. With God's grace I will continue to-morrow.

III

December 13.

Last night I slept very little and had bad dreams. I thought that an unpleasant, sickly-looking woman was pressing herself close against me and I was not afraid of her, nor of the sin, but afraid that my wife should see us. I did not want to hear her reproaches again. I am seventy-two years old and am not yet free. In a waking state it is possible to deceive yourself, but in dreams you get a

true estimate of the plane that you have reached. I had a second dream which gave me another proof of my low moral condition. I thought that some one had brought me some sweets wrapped up in green moss. We unpacked them and divided them between us, leaving a few over. I still went on selecting some for myself, when suddenly I caught sight of an unpleasant-looking, dark-coloured boy, a son of the Sultan, stretching his arm towards me and trying to clutch them. I pushed him away rudely, though I knew quite well that it was far more natural for a child to eat sweets than for me, but I was angry with him and would not give him any and was conscious at the same time that it was mean.

A similar thing happened to me when I was awake. I had a visit from Maria Martemenovna; a messenger called yesterday to ask if she might come. I did not like to hurt her feelings, so I consented, but I find these visits extremely trying. She came to-day. I could hear the sound of her sledge over the crisp snow when she was still some way off. She arrived in her fur coat and shawls, laden with packages she had brought for me, letting in so much cold that I was obliged to put on my dressing-gown. She had brought me pancakes, lenten oil, and apples. She had come to consult me about her daughter, whom a rich

widower wished to marry, and wanted to know if she was to give her consent. Their tremendous opinion of my wisdom is extremely annoying to me. All my protestations to the contrary they invariably put down to my humility. I repeated to her what I had said many times before, that chastity is higher than marriage, but that the Apostle Paul says it is better to marry than be the slave of passion.

Her brother-in-law Nikanor Ivanov was with her. He had once asked me to settle in his house, and has never since ceased worrying me with his visits. Nikanor Ivanov is a great trial to me. I can never overcome my aversion of him. Help me, O Lord, to see my own sins that I may not judge my brother. All his shortcomings are known to me. I see through them with a malicious shrewdness. I am conscious of his weaknesses and cannot conquer my dislike of him — and he is my brother, with the same divine element in him that is in me. What do these aversions mean! It is not my first experience of them. The two strongest antipathies I ever felt in my life were against Louis XVIII., with his corpulent body, hook nose, irritating white hands; his conceit, insolence, and utter stupidity . . . (there! I cannot keep from abusing him). The other was against Nikanor Ivanov, who tormented me

for two whole hours yesterday. Everything about him, from his voice, his hair, to his very nails was repulsive to me. I pretended to be unwell in order to account for my depression to Maria Martemenovna. After they had gone I said my prayers and grew calmer. I thank Thee, O Lord, for the power Thou hast granted me over the only thing that is necessary to me. I tried to remember that Nikanor Ivanov was once an innocent child and that he will come to die like the rest of us. I tried to think kindly of Louis XVIII., who was dead. I felt sorry that Nikanor Ivanov was not there that I might show him how kindly disposed I felt towards him.

Maria Martemenovna brought me a quantity of candles so that I shall be able to write at night.

I have just been out. To the left the stars had already merged into the glorious light of the aurora borealis. How beautiful! How beautiful! I must continue.

My father and mother started on their travels abroad and my brother Constantine and I were left in the entire charge of our grandmother. My brother, who was born two years later than I, had been christened Constantine in the hope that he would one day become the Emperor of Constantinople.

Children readily grow fond of people, especially of those who are kind to them. My grandmother was very nice to me, made much of me, and I loved her in spite of an extremely repellant odour that always seemed to hang about her. The stringent scents could not disguise this odour — I used to notice it particularly when I sat upon her knee. I was still more repelled by her clean yellowish hands covered with wrinkles, so shiny and slippery, the fingers bending over, and the nails unnaturally long. Her languid, lustreless eyes, that seemed almost dead, and the smile playing about her toothless mouth, produced an oppressive though not altogether unpleasant effect on those who saw her. I believed at that time that the languid expression of her eyes was due to the enormous pains she took over her toilet. At any rate I was told so. I felt sorry for her then, but now I think of it with disgust.

I had seen Potemkin once or twice. This huge, greasy, one-eyed monster was terrible.

The thing that awed me most about him, though he used to play with me and call me your Highness, was the fact that he never seemed afraid of my grandmother, like other people, but would speak boldly in her presence in his gruff, bellowing voice.

Another man whom I frequently saw in her

company was Lanskoy. He was nearly always with her. The whole Court hovered about him and made much of him. Needless to say I did not understand who Lanskoy was at the time, and liked him. I was attracted by his curly hair, his shapely legs in tight elk-skin breeches, his happy, light-hearted smile, his diamonds and jewels, glittering all over him.

It was a time full of gaieties. We were taken to Tsarskoye Selo, we rowed on the river, we busied ourselves in the garden, we went out walking and riding. Constantine, a chubby, red-haired little boy, *un petit Bacchus* as grandmother used to call him, kept us amused with his lively fun. He used to mimic everybody, including Sophia Ivanovna and even grandmother herself. One event of that time impressed itself on my memory. This was the death of Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf. She died one evening at Tsarskoye in grandmother's presence. Sophia Ivanovna had just brought us in to her and was talking and smiling, and suddenly her face changed, she reeled, leaned up against the door for support, and fell down senseless. People came running in and we were taken away. The next day we heard that she was dead. I cried very much, felt very miserable, and would not be comforted. They all thought that I was grieved about Sophia Ivanovna,

but that was not true. I cried at the thought that people should have to die; that there should be such a thing as death in the world. I could not comprehend, could not believe, that it was the inevitable fate of all men. I remember how, in my five-year-old soul, there rose up questions about the meaning of death and the meaning of life that ends in death. Those vital questions confronting all men, to which the wise have tried to seek an answer in vain, and the foolish have tried to ignore and forget. As is natural to a child, particularly one in my position, I dismissed the terrifying idea of death from my mind; forgot about it as if it did not exist.

Another important event of that time which came as a consequence of Sophia Ivanovna's death, was that we passed over into the charge of a tutor. He was Nicolai Ivanovich Saltikov — not the Saltikov who, in all probability, was our grandfather, but Nicolai Ivanovich, who had been attached to my father's Court. He was a little man, with an enormous head and a stupid-looking countenance, on which there was a constant grimace. Constantine used to imitate it beautifully. This change necessitated parting with my dear Praskovia Ivanovna, my old nurse.

Those who have not had the misfortune of being born in a royal house can hardly imagine the

distorted view we have of people, nor our false attitude towards them. Instead of being instilled with a sense of dependence on our elders natural to children, or with a sense of gratitude for all the good we enjoyed, we were made to believe that we were some kind of superior beings whose every wish must be gratified. Beings who, by a single word or smile, not only paid for all the kindness showered upon them, but were even conferring some sort of favour, making others happy.

It is true that politeness was expected of us; but by a peculiar childish instinct, I soon saw that we were not meant to be polite for the benefit of others, but merely so as to enhance our own grandeur.

I remember one festive day. My brother, Saltikov and I were driving along the Nevsky. We sat on the front seat, with two powdered footmen in red livery standing behind. It was a beautiful day. Constantine and I were dressed in uniforms, unbuttoned in front, exposing our white waistcoats, on which lay the order of St. Andrew. We wore hats with feathers, which we kept raising all the time to people greeting us. The crowd stared and cheered, and ran after us — "*On vous salue.*" Nicolai Ivanovich kept on saying, "*A droite.*" As we passed the guardhouse the sentinels came running out to have a look at us.

I always liked to see them. From my earliest childhood I had a passion for soldiers and military manœuvres.

It was always instilled into us, particularly by our grandmother, who believed it least of all, that we must always bear in mind that all men are equal. But I knew somehow that those who talked about equality did not believe in it.

Once when I was playing with Sasha Galitsin, he pushed me accidentally, and hurt me.

"How dare you!" I cried.

"I didn't mean it. It's all right!"

I was so outraged that my blood rushed to my heart. I complained to Nicolai Ivanovich, and was not ashamed when Galitsin was made to apologise.

Enough for to-day. My candle is nearly out, and I must break up some fagots. My axe is blunt, and I have nothing to sharpen it on. Besides, I don't know how to do it.

IV

December 17.

I have not written anything for the last three days, because I have not been very well. I tried to read the Testament, but could not bring myself

to that understanding of it, that communion with God that I formerly experienced. I used to think at one time that it was impossible for man to live without desire. I was always in a state of desire for something or other, and am not free from it now. At one time I desired to conquer Napoleon; I desired to be Europe's peacemaker; I desired to free myself of my crown; but all these desires, whether fulfilled, or unfulfilled, soon ceased to attract me, and gave place to new ones. So it went on without end. Recently I longed for winter to come — winter has come. I longed for solitude, and have almost attained it. Now I want to write the story of my life so that it may be a warning to others, but whether I accomplish it or not, new desires will spring up just the same. If life is nothing more than the begetting of desire, and happiness the fulfilment of desire, then is there not some sort of desire fundamental to every man that would always be fulfilled, or that would be possible of fulfilment? It became clear to me that such a desire must be death. The whole of life would then become a preparation for the fulfilment of this desire, and would inevitably be fulfilled.

The idea seemed strange to me at first, but meditating on it further, I was convinced that the only thing a wise man could wish for was death.

Not death for its own sake, but for that stream of life leading from it. It would free the spiritual nature inherent in every man from all passions and temptations. I see this now, having been freed from the worst of that darkness that obscured my own soul from me, not letting me see its oneness with God — nay, that obscured God Himself. The idea came to me unconsciously.

If I really believed that my highest good was to be delivered from passion and to be united with God, then I ought to welcome everything that brought me nearer death, such as old age and sickness. It would in a sense be a fulfilment of my one and only desire. I see this clearly when I am well, but when I am ill, as I have been for the last two days, I cannot see it in the same light, and though I do not rebel against death, yet do not long for its approach. This is a condition of spiritual inertia. I must be patient.

I will go on from where I left off yesterday.

Most of the things I have related about my childhood I have heard from others. Frequently the things that have been told me and my own impressions get mixed up one with another, so that I am sometimes unable to distinguish between the two.

The whole of my life from the very moment of my birth until my present old age, makes me think of a plain enveloped in a thick fog. Everything

is hidden from view, when all at once the mist lifts itself in places, disclosing tiny little islands *des éclaircies* on which people and objects can be distinguished, quite disconnected with one another, surrounded by an impenetrable veil of mist.

In my childhood these *éclaircies* appeared very rarely in the interminable sea of fog and smoke surrounding me. As I grew older I could see them more often, but even now there are periods of my life that have left no trace on my memory. I have already given some of the events of my early childhood that have most impressed themselves on my mind, the death of Sophia Benkendorf, the parting scene with my parents, my lively brother Constantine, and there are other reminiscences that come crowding back as I think of the past. But, for instance, I have no recollection of when Constantine first appeared, nor when we came to live together, but I do remember one Christmas Eve when he was five and I was seven years old. It was after the midnight service when they put us to bed. We both got together as soon as we were left alone. Constantine, with nothing on but a nightshirt, climbed into my bed, and we began a lively game which consisted in slapping each other on our naked bodies. We laughed until our sides ached, and were feeling ever so happy, when suddenly Nicolai Ivanovich came into the

room with his enormous powdered head, and in an embroidered coat. He was horror-stricken on catching sight of us, and flew at us in a perfect state of terror that I have never been able to fathom. He put Constantine back in his own bed, threatened to punish us and to tell our grandmother.

Another thing that impressed itself on my memory occurred somewhat later, when I was about nine. It was the quarrel between Alexei Gregorievich Orlov and Potenkin, which took place in my grandmother's room in our presence. It happened a short time before our departure for the Crimea and our first visit to Moscow. Nicolai Ivanovich had taken us to see grandmother as usual. The large room with a carved and painted ceiling was full of people. My grandmother was sitting before a golden dressing-table, in a white dressing-jacket, surrounded by her maids, who were putting the finishing touches to her hair. It was tastefully dressed on the top of her head. She smiled on seeing us, and went on talking to a general decorated with the order of St. Andrew. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a terrible scar across his cheek from the mouth to the ear. It was Orlov, *le Balafre*. I had never seen him before.

My favourite little dog, Michot, sprang from

the foot of grandmother's dress, and began pawing me and licking my face. We came up to grandmother and kissed her plump yellow hand. She put it under my chin, and began to caress me with her bent fingers. In spite of her perfumes, I felt that unpleasant odour about her. She continued talking to the Balafre. "Is he not a fine fellow?" she said, pointing to me. "You haven't seen him before, have you, Count?"

"They are both fine fellows," the Count replied, kissing our hands in turn.

"All right, all right!" she said to the maid, who was arranging a cap on her head. It was dear Marie Stepanovna, powdered and painted, who was always kind to me.

Lanskoy came up with an open snuff-box. Grandmother took some snuff, and smiled as she caught sight of Matriona Denisovna, her jester, who was just coming in. . . . . .

(*Here the papers break off.*)

MEMOIRS OF A LUNATIC

MEMOIRS OF A LUNATIC.

THIS morning I underwent a medical examination in the government council room. The opinions of the doctors were divided. They argued among themselves and came at last to the conclusion that I was not mad. But this was due to the fact that I tried hard during the examination not to give myself away. I was afraid of being sent to the lunatic asylum, where I would not be able to go on with the mad undertaking I have on my hands. They pronounced me subject to fits of excitement, and something else, too, but nevertheless of sound mind. The doctor prescribed a certain treatment, and assured me that by following his directions my trouble would completely disappear. Imagine, all that torments me disappearing completely! Oh, there is nothing I would not give to be free from my trouble. The suffering is too great!

I am going to tell explicitly how I came to undergo that examination; how I went mad, and how my madness was revealed to the outside world.

Up to the age of thirty-five I lived like the rest of the world, and nobody had noticed any peculiarities in me. Only in my early childhood, before I was ten, I had occasionally been in a mental state similar to the present one, and then only at intervals, whereas now I am continually conscious of it.

I remember going to bed one evening, when I was a child of five or six. Nurse Euprasia, a tall, lean woman in a brown dress, with a double chin, was undressing me, and was just lifting me up to put me into bed.

"I will get into bed myself," I said, preparing to step over the net at the bedside.

"Lie down, Fedinka. You see, Mitinka is already lying quite still," she said, pointing with her head to my brother in his bed.

I jumped into my bed still holding nurse's hand in mine. Then I let it go, stretched my legs under the blanket and wrapped myself up. I felt so nice and warm! I grew silent all of a sudden and began thinking: "I love nurse, nurse loves me and Mitinka, I love Mitinka too, and he loves me and nurse. And nurse loves Taras; I love Taras too, and so does Mitinka. And Taras loves me and nurse. And mother loves me and nurse; nurse loves mother and me and father; everybody loves everybody, and everybody is happy."

Suddenly the housekeeper rushed in and began to shout in an angry voice something about a sugar basin she could not find. Nurse got cross and said she did not take it. I felt frightened; it was all so strange. A cold horror came over me, and I hid myself under the blanket. But I felt no better in the darkness under the blanket. I thought of a boy who had got a thrashing one day in my presence — of his screams, and of the cruel face of Foka when he was beating the boy.

"Then you won't do it any more; you won't!" he repeated and went on beating.

"I won't," said the boy; and Foka kept on repeating over and over, "You won't, you won't!" and did not cease to strike the boy.

That was when my madness came over me for the first time. I burst into sobs, and they could not quiet me for a long while. The tears and despair of that day were the first signs of my present trouble.

I well remember the second time my madness seized me. It was when aunt was telling us about Christ. She told His story and got up to leave the room. But we held her back: "Tell us more about Jesus Christ!" we said.

"I must go," she replied.

"No, tell us more, please!" Mitinka insisted, and she repeated all she had said before. She

told us how they crucified Him, how they beat and martyred Him, and how He went on praying and did not blame them.

"Auntie, why did they torture Him?"

"They were wicked."

"But wasn't He God?"

"Be still — it is nine o'clock, don't you hear the clock striking?"

"Why did they beat Him? He had forgiven them. Then why did they hit Him? Did it hurt Him? Auntie, did it hurt?"

"Be quiet, I say. I am going to the dining-room to have tea now."

"But perhaps it never happened, perhaps He was not beaten by them?"

"I am going."

"No, Auntie, don't go! . . ." And again my madness took possession of me. I sobbed and sobbed, and began knocking my head against the wall.

Such had been the fits of madness in my childhood. But after I was fourteen, from the time the instincts of sex awoke and I began to give way to vice, my madness seemed to have passed, and I was a boy like other boys. Just as happens with all of us who are brought up on rich, over-abundant food, and are spoiled and made effemi-

nate, because we never do any physical work, and are surrounded by all possible temptations, which excite our sensual nature when in the company of other children similarly spoiled, so I had been taught vice by other boys of my age and I indulged in it. As time passed other vices came to take the place of the first. I began to know women, and so I went on living, up to the time I was thirty-five, looking out for all kinds of pleasures and enjoying them. I had a perfectly sound mind then, and never a sign of madness. Those twenty years of my normal life passed without leaving any special record on my memory, and now it is only with a great effort of mind and with utter disgust, that I can concentrate my thoughts upon that time.

Like all the boys of my set, who were of sound mind, I entered school, passed on to the university and went through a course of law studies. Then I entered the State service for a short time, married, and settled down in the country, educating — if our way of bringing up children can be called educating — my children, looking after the land, and filling the post of a Justice of the Peace.

It was when I had been married ten years that one of those attacks of madness I suffered from in my childhood made its appearance again. My wife and I had saved up money from her inherit-

ance and from some Government bonds* of mine which I had sold, and we decided that with that money we would buy another estate. I was naturally keen to increase our fortune, and to do it in the shrewdest way, better than any one else would manage it. I went about inquiring what estates were to be sold, and used to read all the advertisements in the papers. What I wanted was to buy an estate, the produce or timber of which would cover the cost of purchase, and then I would have the estate practically for nothing. I was looking out for a fool who did not understand business, and there came a day when I thought I had found one. An estate with large forests attached to it was to be sold in the Pensa Government. To judge by the information I had received the proprietor of that estate was exactly the imbecile I wanted, and I might expect the forests to cover the price asked for the whole estate. I got my things ready and was soon on my way to the estate I wished to inspect.

We had first to go by train (I had taken my man-servant with me), then by coach, with relays

* These government bonds were of a peculiar kind: At the moment of the abolition of serfdom, the Russian Government handed to the owners of serfs State bonds instead of money, called in Russia "the redemption bonds." The money due by the Government on those papers were paid off at fixed periods — and the owners of those bonds sold them often like ordinary Government papers.

of horses at the various stations. The journey was very pleasant, and my servant, a good-natured youth, liked it as much as I did. We enjoyed the new surroundings and the new people, and having now only about two hundred miles more to drive, we decided to go on without stopping, except to change horses at the stations. Night came on and we were still driving. I had been dozing, but presently I awoke, seized with a sudden fear. As often happens in such a case, I was so excited that I was thoroughly awake and it seemed as if sleep were gone for ever. "Why am I driving? Where am I going?" I suddenly asked myself. It was not that I disliked the idea of buying an estate at a bargain, but it seemed at that moment so senseless to journey to such a far away place, and I had a feeling as if I were going to die there, away from home. I was overcome with horror.

My servant Sergius awoke, and I took advantage of the fact to talk to him. I began to remark upon the scenery around us; he had also a good deal to say, of the people at home, of the pleasure of the journey, and it seemed strange to me that he could talk so gaily. He appeared so pleased with everything and in such good spirits, whereas I was annoyed with it all. Still, I felt more at ease when I was talking with him. Along with my feelings of restlessness and my secret horror,

however, I was fatigued as well, and longed to break the journey somewhere. It seemed to me my uneasiness would cease if I could only enter a room, have tea, and, what I desired most of all, sleep.

We were approaching the town Arzamas.

"Don't you think we had better stop here and have a rest?"

"Why not? It's an excellent idea."

"How far are we from the town?" I asked the driver.

"Another seven miles."

The driver was a quiet, silent man. He was driving rather slowly and wearily.

We drove on. I was silent, but I felt better, looking forward to a rest and hoping to feel the better for it. We drove on and on in the darkness, and the seven miles seemed to have no end. At last we reached the town. It was sound asleep at that early hour. First came the small houses, piercing the darkness, and as we passed them, the noise of our jingling bells and the trotting of our horses sounded louder. In a few places the houses were large and white, but I did not feel less dejected for seeing them. I was waiting for the station, and the samovar, and longed to lie down and rest.

At last we approached a house with pillars in

front of it. The house was white, but it seemed to me very melancholy. I felt even frightened at its aspect and stepped slowly out of the carriage. Sergius was busying himself with our luggage, taking what we needed for the night, running about and stepping heavily on the doorsteps. The sound of his brisk tread increased my weariness. I walked in and came into a small passage. A man received us; he had a large spot on his cheek and that spot filled me with horror. He asked us into a room which was just an ordinary room. My uneasiness was growing.

"Could we have a room to rest in?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, I have a very nice bedroom at your disposal. A square room, newly whitewashed."

The fact of the little room being square was — I remember it so well — most painful to me. It had one window with a red curtain, a table of birchwood and a sofa with a curved back and arms. Sergius boiled the water in the samovar and made the tea. I put a pillow on the sofa in the meantime and lay down. I was not asleep; I heard Sergius busy with the samovar and urging me to have tea. I was afraid to get up from the sofa, afraid of driving away sleep; and just to be sitting in that room seemed awful. I did not get up, but fell into a sort of doze. When I started up out of it, nobody was in the room and it was

quite dark. I woke up with the very same sensation I had the first time and knew sleep was gone. "Why am I here? Where am I going? Just as I am I must be for ever. Neither the Pensa nor any other estate will add to or take anything away from me. As for me, I am unbearably weary of myself. I want to go to sleep, to forget — and I cannot, I cannot get rid of self."

I went out into the passage. Sergius was sleeping there on a narrow bench, his hand hanging down beside it. He was sleeping soundly, and the man with the spot on his cheek was also asleep. I thought, by going out of the room, to get away from what was tormenting me. But *it* followed me and made everything seem dark and dreary. My feeling of horror, instead of leaving me, was increasing.

"What nonsense!" I said to myself. "Why am I so dejected? What am I afraid of?" "You are afraid of me"— I heard the voice of Death —"I am here."

I shuddered. Yes,— Death! Death will come, it will come and it ought not to come. Even in facing actual death I would certainly not feel anything of what I felt now. Then it would be simply fear, whereas now it was more than that. I was actually seeing, feeling the approach of death, and along with it I felt that death ought not to exist.

My entire being was conscious of the necessity of the right to live, and at the same time of the inevitability of dying. This inner conflict was causing me unbearable pain. I tried to shake off the horror; I found a half-burnt candle in a brass candlestick and lighted it. The candle with its red flame burnt down until it was not much taller than the low candlestick. The same thing seemed to be repeated over and over: nothing lasts, life is not, all is death — but death ought not to exist. I tried to turn my thoughts to what had interested me before, to the estate I was to buy and to my wife. Far from being a relief, these seemed nothing to me now. To feel my life doomed to be taken from me was a terror shutting out any other thought. "I must try to sleep," I decided. I went to bed, but the next instant I jumped up, seized with horror. A sickness overcame me, a spiritual sickness not unlike the physical uneasiness preceding actual illness — but in the spirit, not in the body. A terrible fear similar to the fear of death, when mingled with the recollections of my past life, developed into a horror as if life were departing. Life and death were flowing into one another. An unknown power was trying to tear my soul into pieces, but could not rend it. Once more I went out into the passage to look at the two men asleep; once more

I tried to go to sleep. The horror was always the same — now red, now white and square. Something was tearing within but could not be torn apart. A torturing sensation! An arid hatred deprived me of every spark of kindly feeling. Just a dull and steady hatred against myself and against that which had created me. What did create me? God? We say God. . . . "What if I tried to pray?" I suddenly thought. I had not said a prayer for more than twenty years and I had no religious sentiment, although just for formality's sake I fasted and partook of the communion every year. I began saying prayers: "God, forgive me," "Our Father," "Our Lady," I was composing new prayers, crossing myself, bowing to the earth, looking around me all the while for fear I might be discovered in my devotional attitude. The prayers seemed to divert my thoughts from the previous terror, but it was more the fear of being seen by somebody that did it. I went to bed again. But the moment I shut my eyes the very same feeling of terror made me jump up. I could not stand it any longer. I called the hotel servant, roused Sergius from his sleep, ordered him to harness the horses to the carriage and we were soon driving on once more. The open air and the drive made me feel much better. But I realised that something new had

come into my soul, and had poisoned the life I had lived up to that hour.

We reached our destination in the evening. The whole day long I remained struggling with despair, and finally conquered it; but a horror remained in the depth of my soul. It was as if a misfortune had happened to me, and although I was able to forget it for a while, it remained at the bottom of my soul, and I was entirely dominated by it.

The manager of the estate, an old man, received us in a very friendly manner, though not exactly with great joy; he was sorry that the estate was to be sold. The clean little rooms with upholstered furniture, a new, shining samovar on the tea-table, nice large cups, honey served with the tea,— everything was pleasant to see. I began questioning him about the estate without any interest, as if I were repeating a lesson learned long ago and nearly forgotten. It was so uninteresting. But that night I was able to go to sleep without feeling miserable. I thought this was due to having said my prayers again before going to bed.

After that incident I resumed my ordinary life; but the apprehension that this horror would again come upon me was continual. I had to live my usual life without any respite, not giving way to my thoughts, just like a schoolboy who repeats

by habit and without thinking the lesson learned by heart. That was the only way to avoid being seized again by the horror and the despair I had experienced in Arzamas.

I had returned home safe from my journey; I had not bought the estate — I had not enough money. My life at home seemed to be just as it had always been, save for my having taken to saying prayers and to going to church. But now, when I recollect that time, I see that I only imagined my life to be the same as before. The fact was I merely continued what I had previously started, and was running with the same speed on rails already laid; but I did not undertake anything new.

Even in those things which I had already taken in hand my interest had diminished. I was tired of everything, and was growing very religious. My wife noticed this, and was often vexed with me for it. No new fit of distress occurred while I was at home. But one day I had to go unexpectedly to Moscow, where a lawsuit was pending. In the train I entered into conversation with a landowner from Kharkov. We were talking about the management of estates, about bank business, about the hotels in Moscow, and the theatres. We both decided to stop at the "Moscow Court," in the Miasnizkaia Street, and go that evening to the

opera, to *Faust*. When we arrived I was shown into a small room, the heavy smell of the passage being still in my nostrils. The porter brought in my portmanteau, and the maid lighted the candle, the flame of which burned up brightly and then flickered, as it usually does. In the room next to mine I heard somebody coughing, probably an old man. The maid went out, and the porter asked whether I wished him to open my bag. In the meanwhile the candle flame had flared up, throwing its light on the blue wallpaper with yellow stripes, on the partition, on the shabby table, on the small sofa in front of it, on the mirror hanging on the wall, and on the window. I saw what the small room was like, and suddenly felt the horror of the Arzamas night awakening within me.

"My God! Must I stay here for the night? How can I?" I thought. "Will you kindly unfasten my bag?" I said to the porter, to keep him longer in the room. "And now I'll dress quickly and go to the theatre," I said to myself.

When the bag had been untied I said to the porter, "Please tell the gentleman in Number 8 — the one who came with me — that I shall be ready presently, and ask him to wait for me."

The porter left, and I began to dress in haste, afraid to look at the walls. "But what non-

sense!" I said to myself. "Why am I frightened like a child? I am not afraid of ghosts—" Ghosts! — To be afraid of ghosts is nothing to what I was afraid of! "But what is it? Absolutely nothing. I am only afraid of myself. . . . Nonsense!"

I slipped into a cold, rough, starched shirt, stuck in the studs, put on evening dress and new boots, and went to call for the Kharkov landowner, who was ready. We started for the opera house. He stopped on the way to have his hair curled, while I went to a French hairdresser to have mine cut, where I talked a little to the Frenchwoman in the shop and bought a pair of gloves. Everything seemed all right. I had completely forgotten the oblong room in the hotel, and the walls.

I enjoyed the *Faust* performance very much, and when it was over my companion proposed that we should have supper. This was contrary to my habits; but just at that moment I remembered the walls in my room, and accepted.

We returned home after one. I had two glasses of wine — an unusual thing for me — in spite of which I was feeling quite at ease.

But the moment we entered the passage with the lowered lamp lighting it, the moment I was surrounded by the peculiar smell of the hotel, I felt a cold shudder of horror running down my

back. But there was nothing to be done. I shook hands with my new friend, and stepped into my room.

I had a frightful night — much worse than the night at Arzamas; and it was not until dawn, when the old man in the next room was coughing again, that I fell asleep — and then not in my bed, but, after getting in and out of it many times, on the sofa.

I suffered the whole night unbearably. Once more my soul and my body were tearing themselves apart within me. The same thoughts came again: "I am living, I have lived up till now, I have the right to live; but all around me is death and destruction. Then why live? Why not die? Why not kill myself immediately? No; I could not. I am afraid. Is it better to wait for death to come when it will? No, that is even worse; and I am also afraid of that. Then, I must live. But what for? In order to die?" I could not get out of that circle. I took a book, and began reading. For a moment it made me forget my thoughts. But then the same questions and the same horror came again. I got into bed, lay down, and shut my eyes. That made the horror worse. God had created things as they are. But why? They say, "Don't ask; pray." Well, I did pray; I was praying now, just as I did at Arza-

mas. At that time I had prayed simply, like a child. Now my prayers had a definite meaning: "If Thou exist, reveal Thy existence to me. To what end am I created? What am I?" I was bowing to the earth, repeating all the prayers I knew, composing new ones; and I was adding each time, "Reveal Thy existence to me!" I became quiet, waiting for an answer. But no answer came, as if there were nothing to answer. I was alone, alone with myself and was answering my own questions in place of Him who would not answer. "What am I created for?" "To live in a future life," I answered. "Then why this uncertainty and torment? I cannot believe in future life. I did believe when I asked, but not with my whole soul. Now I cannot, I cannot! If Thou didst exist, Thou wouldst reveal it to me, to all men. But Thou dost not exist, and there is nothing true but distress." But I cannot accept that! I rebelled against it; I implored Him to reveal His existence to me. I did all that everybody does, but He did not reveal Himself to me. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you," I remembered, and began to entreat; in doing so I felt no real comfort, but just surcease of despair. Perhaps it was not entreaty on my part, but only denial of Him. You retreat a step from Him, and He goes from you a mile. I did not believe in Him,

and yet here I was entreating Him. But He did not reveal Himself. I was balancing my accounts with Him, and was blaming Him. I simply did not believe.

The next day I used all my endeavours to get through with my affairs somehow during the day, in order to be saved from another night in the hotel room. Although I had not finished everything, I left for home in the evening.

That night at Moscow brought a still greater change into my life, which had been changing ever since the night at Arzamas. I was now paying less attention to my affairs, and grew more and more indifferent to everything around me. My health was also getting bad. My wife urged me to consult a doctor. To her my continual talk about God and religion was a sign of ill-health, whereas I knew I was ill and weak, because of the unsolved questions of religion and of God.

I was trying not to let that question dominate my mind, and continued living amid the old unaltered conditions, filling up my time with incessant occupations. On Sundays and feast days I went to church; I even fasted as I had begun to do since my journey to Pensa, and did not cease to pray. I had no faith in my prayers, but somehow I kept the demand note in my possession instead

of tearing it up, and was always presenting it for payment, although I was aware of the impossibility of getting paid. I did it just on the chance. I occupied my days, not with the management of the estate — I felt disgusted with all business because of the struggle it involved — but with the reading of papers, magazines, and novels, and with card-playing for small stakes. The only outlet for my energy was hunting. I had kept that up from habit, having been fond of this sport all my life.

One day in winter, a neighbour of mine came with his dogs to hunt wolves. Having arrived at the meeting-place, we put on snowshoes to walk over the snow and move rapidly along. The hunt was unsuccessful; the wolves contrived to escape through the stockade. As I became aware of that from a distance, I took the direction of the forest to follow the fresh track of a hare. This led me far away into a field. There I spied the hare, but he had disappeared before I could fire. I turned to go back, and had to pass a forest of huge trees. The snow was deep, the snowshoes were sinking in, and the branches were entangling me. The wood was getting thicker and thicker. I wondered where I was, for the snow had changed all the familiar places. Suddenly I realised that I had lost my way. How should I get

home or reach the hunting party? Not a sound to guide me! I was tired and bathed in perspiration. If I stopped, I would probably freeze to death; if I walked on, my strength would forsake me. I shouted, but all was quiet, and no answer came. I turned in the opposite direction, which was wrong again, and looked round. Nothing but the wood on every hand. I could not tell which was east or west. I turned back again, but I could hardly move a step. I was frightened, and stopped. The horror I had experienced in Arzamas and in Moscow seized me again, only a hundred times greater. My heart was beating, my hands and feet were shaking. Am I to die here? I don't wan't want to! Why death? What is death? I was about to ask again, to reproach God, when I suddenly felt I must not; I ought not. I had not the right to present any account to Him; He had said all that was necessary, and the fault was wholly mine. I began to implore His forgiveness for I felt disgusted with myself. The horror, however, did not last long. I stood still one moment, plucked up courage, took the direction which seemed to be the right one, and was actually soon out of the wood. I had not been far from its edge when I lost my way. As I came out on the main road, my hands and feet were still shaking, and my heart was beating violently. But my soul was

full of joy. I soon found my party, and we all returned home together. I was not quite happy, but I knew there was a joy within me which I would understand later on; and that joy proved real. I went to my study to be alone and prayed, remembering my sins, and asking for forgiveness. They did not seem to be numerous; but when I thought of what they were they were hateful to me.

Then I began to read the Scriptures. The Old Testament I found incomprehensible but enchanting, the New touching in its meekness. But my favourite reading was now the lives of the saints; they were consoling to me, affording examples which seemed more and more possible to follow. Since that time I have grown even less interested in the management of affairs and in family matters. These things even became repulsive to me. Everything was wrong in my eyes. I did not quite realise why they were wrong, but I knew that the things of which my whole life had consisted, now counted for nothing. This was plainly revealed to me again on the occasion of the projected purchase of an estate, which was for sale in our neighbourhood on very advantageous terms. I went to inspect it. Everything was very satisfactory, the more so because the peasants on that estate had no land of their own beyond their vegetable gardens.

I grasped at once that in exchange for the right of using the landowner's pasture-grounds, they would do all the harvesting for him; and the information I was given proved that I was right. I saw how important that was, and was pleased, as it was in accordance with my old habits of thought. But on my way home I met an old woman who asked her way, and I entered into a conversation with her, during which she told me about her poverty. On returning home, when telling my wife about the advantages the estate afforded, all at once I felt ashamed and disgusted. I said I was not going to buy that estate, for its profits were based on the sufferings of the peasants. I was struck at that moment with the truth of what I was saying, the truth of the peasants having the same desire to live as ourselves, of their being our equals, our brethren, the children of the Father, as the Gospel says. But unexpectedly something which had been gnawing within me for a long time became loosened and was torn away, and something new seemed to be born instead.

My wife was vexed with me and abused me. But I was full of joy. This was the first sign of my madness. My utter madness began to show itself about a month later.

This began by my going to church; I was listening to the Mass with great attention and with

a faithful heart, when I was suddenly given a wafer; after which every one began to move forward to kiss the Cross, pushing each other on all sides. As I was leaving church, beggars were standing on the steps. It became instantly clear to me that this ought not to be, and in reality was not. But if this is not, then there is no death and no fear, and nothing is being torn asunder within me, and I am not afraid of any calamity which may come.

At that moment the full light of the truth was kindled in me, and I grew into what I am now. If all this horror does not necessarily exist around me, then it certainly does not exist within me. I distributed on the spot all the money I had among the beggars in the porch, and walked home instead of driving in my carriage as usual, and all the way I talked with the peasants.

TWO WAYFARERS

TWO WAYFARERS

Two men with bundles over their shoulders were walking along the dusty highroad that lies between Moscow and Toula. The younger man wore a short coat and velveteen trousers. Spectacles gleamed out from under the brim of his new peasant's hat. The other was a man of about fifty, remarkably handsome, dressed in a monk's frock, with a leather belt round his waist and a high round black cap, such as novices wear in monasteries. His long dark beard and dark hair were turning grey.

The younger man was pale and sallow, was covered with dust, and seemed scarcely able to drag one foot after the other. The old man walked cheerfully along, swinging his arms, his shoulders well thrown back. It seemed as though dust dared not settle on his handsome face nor his body feel fatigue.

The young man, Serge Vasilievich Borzin, was a doctor of science of Moscow University. The old man, Nicholas Petrovich Serpov, had been a sub-lieutenant in an infantry regiment during the

reign of Alexander, then he had become a monk, but was expelled from the monastery for bad conduct. He had, however, retained the monastic garb. The men had come together in this wise. Borzin, after taking his doctor's degree, and after writing several articles for the Moscow reviews, went to stay in the country, to plunge into the current of peasant life and to refresh himself in the waves of the popular stream, as he put it. After a month spent in the country in complete solitude, he wrote the following letter to a literary friend of his, who was editor of a journal:—

"My Master and Friend Ivan Finogeich, — It is not for us to predict — indeed we cannot — the ultimate solution of those problems which are solving themselves in the secrecy of the village life of the Russian people. Various phases of the Russian mind and its phenomena must be carefully taken into consideration — the seclusion of their lives; the revolutionary reforms introduced by Peter; etc., etc."

The long and the short of it was that Borzin, having been deeply impressed by the everyday life of the people, had become convinced that the problem of determining the destiny of the Russian nation was more difficult and complex than he had

been wont to imagine, and that in order to find its solution he must traverse Russia on foot; so he asked his friend not to discuss the question in his journal pending his return, promising to set forth all that he discovered in a series of articles.

Having written this letter, Borzin set about making preparations for his journey. Though it annoyed him, he had to consider such details as what he should wear. He bought a coat, nailed boots, and a hat such as the peasants wear, and, shutting out his servants, studied himself for a long time in his glass. He could not get rid of his spectacles, as he was too near-sighted. After this, the most essential thing was to get some money. He needed at least 300 roubles. There was no money in his cash-box, so Borzin summoned his bailiff and accountant and went through his books. Finding that he had 180 quarters of oats, he ordered them to be sold, but the bailiff remarked that the oats had been kept for seed. In another column he found an entry of 160 quarters of rye, and asked if that would suffice for seed. The bailiff replied by asking if he wanted them to sow last year's rye. The conversation ended shortly after, the bailiff recognising that Borzin knew as little about farming as a babe, and Borzin realising that the rye had been sown already, that new seed was usually used, and that

after deducting enough for daily needs from the 180 quarters of corn, the rest might be sold.

The money having been obtained, Borzin made up his mind one evening to start next day, when he heard an unknown voice in the hall, and his father's old valet Stephen entered and announced Nicholas Petrovich Serpov.

"Who is he?"

"Don't you remember the monk who used to visit your father?"

"No, not at all. What does he want?"

"He wishes to see you, but I don't think he is quite himself."

Serpov entered the room, bowed, stamped his foot and said,—

"Serpov — a wayfarer." They shook hands. "Nothing but ignorance — no education. I admonish Russia in vain. Russia is a fool. The peasant is industrious but Russia is a fool. Don't you agree? I knew your father. We used to sit and chat, and he would say, 'You will get on.' But why are you dressed like that? I am as plain-spoken as a soldier, and I ask why?"

"I am going to make a journey on foot."

"I am on the road myself. I am a wayfarer. I have been all the way to Greece, to the Athos Monastery, but I never saw any one as honest as our peasants."

Serpov sat down, asked for vodka, and then went to bed. Borzin was puzzled. Next day Serpov was the listener and, as Borzin liked to talk, Serpov heard all about his theory and the aim of his journey. Serpov thoroughly approved of it, and ended by offering himself as companion, which Borzin accepted; partly because he did not know how to get rid of him; partly because, with all his craziness, Serpov could flatter; partly, and chiefly, because Borzin regarded the monk as a remarkable, though somewhat complicated, phenomenon of Russian life.

They set out, and when we found them on the highroad they were nearing the place, where, according to their plan, the first night was to be spent. They had accomplished the first twenty-two versts of their journey.

Serpov had a glass at the public-house and was in good spirits.

KHODINKA: AN INCIDENT OF THE CORONATION OF NICHOLAS II.

KHODINKA*: AN INCIDENT OF THE CORONATION OF NICHOLAS II.

"I CANNOT understand such obstinacy. Why should you do without sleep and go 'with the people,' when you can go straight to the pavilion with your Aunt Vera, and see everything without any trouble? I told you Behr had promised to pass you through, though, as far as that's concerned, you have the right of entry as a maid of honour."

It was thus that Prince Paul Golitsin — known in the aristocratic set as "Pigeon" — addressed his twenty-three-year-old daughter Alexandra, called for shortness' sake "Rina."

The conversation took place in Moscow on 17th May 1893 — on the eve of the popular fête held to celebrate the coronation. Rina, a strong, handsome girl, with a profile characteristic of her race — the hooked nose of a bird of prey — had long ceased to be passionately devoted to balls

* The Khodinka is a large plain outside Moscow where the military often exercise. It was here that the people of Moscow assembled to celebrate the Tsar's accession, and where many hundreds were crushed to death.

or social functions, and was, or at least considered herself to be, an "advanced" woman and a lover of "the people." She was her father's only daughter and his favourite, and always did what she wished. In this particular instance it occurred to her that she would like to go to the popular festival with her cousin, not at mid-day with the Court, but together with the people, the porter and the grooms of their own household, who intended to start in the early morning.

"But, father, I do not want to *look at* the people; I want to *be with* them. I want to see how they feel towards the young Tsar. Surely for once . . ."

"Well, well, do as you like. I know how obstinate you are."

"Don't be angry, father, dear. I promise to be careful, and Alec will not leave my side."

Although the plan seemed wild and fantastic to her father, he gave his consent.

"Yes, of course you may," he answered when she asked if she might have the victoria. "Drive to Khodinka and send it back."

"All right."

She went up to him, and he blessed her, as was his custom, and she kissed his big white hand, and they separated.

There was no talk of anything but the morrow's

festival among the cigarette-makers in the lodgings let by the notorious Marie Yakovlevna. Several of Emelian Tagodin's friends had met in his room to discuss when they should start.

"It's not worth while going to bed at all. You'll only oversleep yourself," said Yakov, a bright youth who occupied a space behind a wooden partition.

"Why not have a little sleep?" retorted Emelian. "We'll start at dawn. Every one says that's the thing to do."

"Well, if we are going to bed, it's time we went."

"But, Emelian, mind you call us if we don't wake up in time."

Emelian promised he would, and, taking a reel of silk from a drawer in the table, drew the lamp nearer, and began to sew a missing button on his summer overcoat. When he had finished this job he laid out his best clothes and cleaned his boots, and, after saying several prayers —"Our Father," "Hail Mary," etc., the meaning of which he had never fathomed, and had not even been interested in — he took off his boots, and lay down on the crumpled, creaking bed.

"Why not?" he said to himself. "There is such a thing as luck. Perhaps I shall get a lottery ticket and win." The rumour had spread among

the people that, besides other gifts, some lottery tickets were to be distributed. "Well, the 10,000 rouble prize is expecting too much, but one might win 500 roubles. What couldn't I do with it? I could send something to the old folk; I'd make my wife leave her situation: it's no sort of existence living apart like this. I'd buy a good watch and a fur coat. As it is, it's one long struggle, and you're never out of your difficulties."

He began to dream that he and his wife were walking around the Alexander Gardens, and that the same policeman who had taken him up a year ago for using bad language when he was drunk was no longer a policeman, but a general, and that this same general smiled at him and invited him to go to a neighbouring public-house with him to hear a mechanical organ. The organ sounded just like a clock striking, and Emelian awoke to find that the clock really was striking wheezily, and that the landlady was coughing behind his door. It was not quite so dark as it had been the night before.

"Don't oversleep yourself."

Emelian got up, went barefooted across the room to the wooden partition to awake Yasha, and then proceeded to dress carefully, greasing and brushing his hair before the broken mirror.

"I'm all right! That's why girls are so fond

of me. Only I don't want to get into mischief."

He went to the landlady, as arranged the day before, to get some food. He put a meat pie, two eggs, some ham, and a small bottle of vodka into a bag, and then left the house with Yasha and walked towards the Peter Park.

They were not alone. Some were in front; others were hurrying up from behind. From all sides happy men, women, and children, dressed in their best, were collecting together, all going in the same direction. At last they reached the field called Khodinka. Its edges were black with people. It was cold in the early dawn, and here and there smoke was arising from the fires which were made from such twigs and branches as were available. Emelian found some friends who also had a fire, and round which they were sitting preparing their food and drink. The sun was rising clear and bright, and the general merriment was increasing. The air was filled with singing and chattering, and with jokes and laughter. Everything gave rise to pleasure, but still greater pleasures were in store. Emelian had a drink, and, lighting a cigarette, felt happier than ever.

The people were wearing their best clothes, but several rich merchants, with their wives and children, were also noticeable among the well-dressed working men. Rina Golitsin, too, was remarka-

ble as she walked at her cousin's side between the wood fires, happy and radiant at having got her own way, and at the thought of celebrating with the people the accession to the throne of a Tsar who was adored by them.

"Here's to your health, good lady," cried a factory hand to her, raising his glass to his lips. "Don't refuse to break bread with us."

"Thank you."

"You ought to answer 'a good appetite to you,'" whispered her cousin, showing off his knowledge of popular customs, and they moved on.

Accustomed to occupy the best places everywhere, they penetrated through the crowd, going straight for the pavilion. The crowd was so dense that, notwithstanding the bright weather, a thick mist caused by the breath of the people, hung over the field. But the police would not let them pass.

"I'm rather glad," said Rina. "Let us return," and so they went back into the crowd.

"Lies, all lies," said Emelian, seated with his companions in a circle round the food which was spread out on white paper — in answer to a young factory hand who, on approaching them, told them that the distribution of gifts had begun.

"I tell you it is so. It's contrary to regulations, but they have begun. I saw it myself.

Each one receives a mug and a packet and away they go."

"Of course, what do the crazy commissionaires care? They give as they choose."

"But why should they, how can they — against regulations?"

"You see they can."

"Let's go, friends. Why should we wait?"

They all rose. Emelian pocketed his bottle with the remains of the vodka and advanced with his comrades. They had not gone more than twenty yards when the crowd became so dense that it was difficult to stir.

"What are you pushing for?"

"You're pushing yourself."

"You're not the only one here."

"That'll do."

"Oh, Lord! I'm crushed!" cried a woman's voice.

A child could be heard screaming on the other side.

"Go to —"

"How dare you? Are you the only one? Everything will be taken before we get there. But I'll be even with them, the beasts, the devils," cried Emelian, squaring his stalwart shoulders and elbowing his way forward as best he could. Seeing every one else was elbowing and pushing he,

without knowing exactly why, also began to try to force a way for himself through the crowd. On every side people were crushing him, but those in front did not move or let any one through their ranks — and all were shouting and shrieking and groaning.

Emelian silently clenched his strong teeth and frowned, but without losing heart or strength he steadily continued to push those in front, though he made but little progress.

All at once there was a sudden agitation; the steady surging and swaying was followed by a rush forward to the right. Emelian looked to that side and saw something whizz over his head and fall among the crowd. One, two, three — he realised what it meant, and a voice near him exclaimed:

"Cursed devils — they are throwing the things among the crowd!"

The sound of screaming, laughing and groaning came from that part of the crowd where the bags were falling. Some one gave Emelian a severe blow in the ribs which made him even gloomier and angrier, but before he had time to recover from the blow some one else had trodden on his foot. Then his coat, his new coat, caught and was torn. With a feeling of maliciousness in his heart he exerted all his strength to advance when something suddenly happened which he could not under-

stand; and he found himself in an open space and could see the tents, where the mugs and packets of sweets were to be distributed. Up to then he had seen nothing but the backs of other people in front of him.

He felt glad, but only for a moment, for he realised that the reason he could see all these was because those who were in front had reached the trench and were slipping or rolling over into it, and that he himself was knocked down on top of a mass of people. He was tumbling on those below, and others from behind him were in their turn tumbling on him. For the first time he felt afraid. As he fell, a woman in a woollen shawl stumbled over him. Shaking her off, he tried to turn round, but those behind prevented him and his strength began to fail. Then some one clutched his legs and screamed. He neither saw nor heard anything, but fought his way through, treading on human beings on all sides.

"Friends, help,— take my watch — my gold watch," shrieked a man near him.

"Who wants a watch now?" thought Emelian, climbing out to the other side of the trench.

His heart was divided between fear — fear for himself and for his own life — and anger at those wild creatures who were pushing him. In spite of this, the aim with which he had set out — to reach

the tents and get hold of a packet with a lottery ticket — still drew him on.

The tents were now close at hand. He could see the distributors quite distinctly and could hear the cries of those who had arrived at the tents and the creaking of the boards on which the people in front were crowding.

Emelian stumbled. He had only about twenty paces more to go when he heard a child's scream under or rather between his feet. Emelian looked down and saw a bare-headed boy in a torn shirt lying face downwards, crying incessantly, and clutching at his legs. He felt his heart stop beating. All fear for himself immediately disappeared and with it his anger against the rest. He was sorry for the boy and, stooping down, put his arm round his waist, but those behind him were pushing so violently that he nearly fell and let go the child. Summoning his strength for a supreme effort he caught him up again and lifted him on his shoulders. For a moment the crush became less and Emelian managed to carry off the child.

"Give him to me," cried a coachman who was at Emelian's side, and taking the boy, raised him above the crowd.

"Run over the people."

Looking back, Emelian saw how the child walked further and further away, over the heads

and shoulders of the swaying mass, now rising above it, now vanishing in the crowd.

Emelian, however, continued to advance. He could not help doing so; but he was no longer attracted by the gifts and had no desire to reach the tents. He thought of the little boy Yasha, of those who had been trampled on, and of those whom he had seen as he crossed the trench.

When he reached the pavilion at last he received a mug and a packet of sweets, but they gave him no pleasure. What pleased him was that the crush was over, and that he could breathe and move about; but his pleasure, however, only lasted a moment, on account of the sight which met his eyes. A woman, in a torn striped shawl and in buttoned boots which stuck straight up, with her brown hair loose and in disorder, was lying on her back. One hand lay on the grass, the other, with closed fingers, was folded below her breast. Her face was white — that bluish white peculiar to the dead. She was the first who had been crushed to death and had been thrown over the fence right in front of the Tsar's pavilion.

When Emelian caught sight of her, two policemen were standing over her, and a police officer was giving them directions. A minute after a few Cossacks rode up and no sooner had their officer given them some order, than they rode full speed

at Emelian and at the others who were standing there, and drove them back into the crowd. Emelian was again caught in the whirl. The crush became worse than ever; and to add to the horror, one and the same everlasting crying and groaning of women and children, and men trampling their fellows under foot — and not able to help doing so. Emelian was no longer terrified or angry with those who were crushing him. He had but one desire — to get out, to be free, to have a smoke and a drink, and to explain the meaning of those feelings which arose in his mind.

He longed for a smoke and a drink, and when at last he managed to get away from the throng, he satisfied his craving for these.

It was not so with Alec and Rina. As they did not expect anything, they moved about among the people who were seated in groups, chatting with the women and children, when the whole people suddenly made a rush for the pavilion, the rumour having spread that the sweets and mugs were being given away contrary to regulations, and before Rina had time to turn round, she was separated from Alec and carried along by the crowd, and was overcome by terror. She tried to be quiet, but could not help screaming out for mercy. But there was no mercy, for they pressed round her

more and more. Her dress was torn, and her hat also fell off. She could not be quite sure, but she thought some one snatched at her watch and chain. Though she was a strong girl and might have resisted, she was in mortal fear not being able to breathe. Ragged and battered she just managed to keep on her feet.

But the moment the Cossacks charged the crowd to disperse it, Rina lost hope and directly she yielded to despair, her strength failed her and she fainted. Falling down she was not conscious of anything further.

When she regained consciousness she was lying on the grass. A bearded working man in a torn coat was squatting beside her and squirting water into her face as she opened her eyes; the man crossed himself and spat out the water. It was Emelian.

"Who are you? Where am I?"

"You're on Khodinka field. Who am I? I'm a man, I've been badly crushed myself, but the likes of us can stand a good deal," said Emelian.

"What's this?" Rina asked, pointing to the coppers that lay on her breast.

"That's because people thought you were dead, they gave coppers for your burial. But I had a

good look at you and thought to myself: 'No, she's alive,' and I got some water for you."

Rina glanced at herself and seeing her torn dress and bare breast, felt ashamed. The man understood and covered her.

"You're all right, miss, you'll not die."

People came up and also a policeman, while Rina sat up, and gave her father's name and address, and Emelian went for the cab. The crowd round her continued to increase. When Emelian returned with the cab, she rose, and refusing help, got into the vehicle by herself. She was so ashamed of the condition she was in.

"Where is your cousin?" asked an old woman.

"I don't know. I don't know," said Rina in despair.

(On reaching home she learnt that Alec had managed to leave the crowd when the crush first began and he returned home safely.)

"That man saved me," said Rina. "If it had not been for him, I don't know what would have happened."

"What is you name?" she said, turning to Emelian.

"Mine? What does my name matter?"

"She's a princess," a woman whispered in his ear. "Ri-i-i-ch."

"Come with me to my father, he will thank

you." Suddenly the heart of Emelian seemed to be infused with a kind of strength so that he would not have exchanged this feeling for a lottery ticket worth 200,000 roubles.

"Nonsense, go home, miss. What is there to thank me for?"

"Oh, no. I would so much rather.

"Good-bye, miss, God be with you. But, there, don't take away my overcoat," and he showed his white teeth with a merry smile which lived in Rina's memory to console her for the most terrible moments of her life.

INTRODUCTION TO "A MOTHER"

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I HAD known Marie Alexandrovna ever since we were children. As so often happens with young people, there was no suggestion of love-making about our companionship, with the possible exception of one evening when she was at our house and we played "Ladies and Gentlemen." She was fifteen, with plump, rosy hands, beautiful dark eyes, and a thick plait of black hair. I was so impressed by her during that evening that I imagined that I was in love with her. But that was the only time; during all the rest of our forty years' acquaintance we were on those excellent terms of friendship which exist between a man and a woman who mutually respect each other, which are so delightful when — as in our case — they are free from any idea of love-making.

I got a lot of enjoyment out of our friendship, and it taught me a great deal. I have never known a woman who more perfectly typified the good wife, the good mother. Through her I learned much, and came to understand many things.

I saw her for the last time last year, only a month before her death, which neither of us expected. She had just settled down to live alone with Barbara, her cook, in the grounds of a monastery. It was very strange to see this mother of eight children — this woman who had nearly fifty grandchildren — living alone in that way. But there was an evident finality about her determination to live by herself for the rest of her days in spite of the more or less sincere invitations of her family. As I knew her to be, I will not say a free-thinker, for she never laid any stress on that, but one who thought for herself with courage and common sense, I was puzzled at first to see her taking up her abode in the precincts of a monastery.

I knew that her heart was too full of real feeling to have any room for superstition, and I was well aware of her hatred of hypocrisy and of everything pharisaical. Then suddenly came this house close to the monastery, this regular attendance at church services, and this complete submission to the guidance of the priest, Father Nicodim, though all this was done unostentatiously and with moderation, as if she were somewhat ashamed of it.

When we met it was evident that she wished to avoid all discussion of her reasons for choosing a life of that sort. But I think that I understood.

Although she had a sceptical mind, it was dominated by the fulness of her heart. When, after forty years of household activity, she found that all her children had outgrown the need for her care, she was at a loose end, and it became necessary to seek some fresh occupation for her heart, some fresh outlet for her feelings. Since the homes of her children could not satisfy her cravings, she decided to go into retreat, hoping that she would find the solace which others found in seclusion, the consolation of religion. Though her pride, both on her own account and for the sake of her children, prevented her from giving more than the merest hint of the truth, there could be no doubt that she was unhappy.

I knew all her children, and when I inquired after them she answered reluctantly, for she never blamed them. But I could see what a tragedy, or rather, what a series of tragedies lay buried in her heart.

"Yes, Volodia has done very well," she said. "He is President of the Chamber, and has bought an estate. . . . Yes, his children are growing up — three boys and two girls," and as she stopped talking her black eyebrows were contracted into a frown, and I could see that she was making an effort to prevent herself from expressing her thoughts, trying to rid herself of them.

"Well, and Basil?"

"Basil is just the same; you know the sort of man he is."

"Still devoted to society?"

"Yes."

"Has he any children?"

"Three."

That is how we talked when her sons and daughters were our subject of conversation.

She would rather talk of Peter than of the others. He was the failure of the family — he had squandered all that he had, did not pay his debts, and caused his mother more distress than any of them. But he was her best-beloved in spite of his waywardness, for she saw, as she put it, his "heart of gold."

There is often a peculiar charm about the reminiscences of those who have gone through hidden sorrows, and it was only when we touched on the days of her careless youth that she let herself go. Our last talk was the best of them all, so delightful that I did not leave her home until after midnight. It was full of tender sympathy. It was about Peter Nikiforovich, the first tutor her children ever had. He was a graduate of Moscow University, and he died of consumption in her house. He was a remarkable man, and had exercised a great influence over her.

Though she did not realise it, he was the only man whom she could, or did, love besides her husband.

We talked about him and about his theories of life, views which I had known and shared at the time. He was not exactly a disciple of Rousseau, though he knew and approved of his theories, but he had a mind of the same type. He very much resembled our usual conception of the wise men of antiquity. He was full of the gentle humility of unconscious Christianity. Though he was convinced that he hated the teachings of Christianity, his whole life was one long self-sacrifice. He was obviously wretched when he could find no opportunity to deny himself something for the sake of others, and it must be something that could only be relinquished with suffering and difficulty. Then he was really happy. He was as innocent as a child and as tender as a woman.

There may be some doubt as to whether she loved him; but there could be absolutely no doubt that she was his only love, his idol, for any one who ever saw him in her presence. To banish any shadow of question, it was quite enough to watch his great, round, blue eyes following her every movement, reflecting every shade of expression on her face; frail and attenuated as he was, in his shapeless, ill-fitting coat, it was more than enough to see him draw himself up, to note how

he bent or turned toward the spot which she occupied.

Alexis Nicolaevich, her late husband, knew it, and did not mind in the least, frequently leaving him alone with her and the children for whole evenings. The children knew it. They loved both their mother and their tutor, and thought it only natural that their mother and their tutor should love one another.

Alexis Nicolaevich's only precaution was to call him "Peter the Wise." He, too, loved him and respected him; indeed, he could not help respecting him for his exceptional affectionate devotion to the children, and for the unusual loftiness of his morality; and never for a moment did he think of passion between him and his wife as a possibility. But I am inclined to believe that she did love him. His death was not only a deep grief, but a bereavement. Certain sides of her nature, the best, the fundamental, the most essential, withered away after his death.

So we talked about him, and about his opinions on life; how he had believed that the highest morality lay in taking from others as little as possible, and in giving to others as much as possible of oneself, of one's soul; and how, in order that one might take as little as possible, he believed that one should cultivate what Plato ranked as the

highest virtue, abstinence: that one should sleep on a plank bed, wear the same clothing winter and summer, have bread and water for one's nourishment, or, as a great indulgence, milk. (That was how he had lived, and Marie Alexandrovna thought that that was how he had ruined his health.) He had held that, to equip oneself for giving to others, it was essential to develop one's spiritual forces, chief among which was love, dynamic love, devoted to service in life, to uplifting of life. He would have brought up the children on these lines if he could have had his way; but their parents insisted upon some concession to convention, and an excellent compromise was adopted. But unfortunately, his *régime* did not last long, as he only lived with them for four years.

"Just think of it," said Marie Alexandrovna, "I have taken to reading religious tracts, I listen to Father Nicodim's sermons, and believe me"— here her smiling eyes shone with a glance so bright that it brought to mind the independence of thought which was so characteristic of her — "believe me, all these pious exhortations are infinitely inferior to the sayings of Peter Nikiforovich. They deal with the same things, but on a much lower plane. But, above all, he taught one not so much by precept as by practice. And how did he do it? Why, his whole life was a flame,

and it consumed him. Do you remember when Mitia and Vera had scarlatina — you were staying with us — do you remember how he sat up at night with them, but insisted upon going on with his lessons with the older children during the day? He regarded it as a sacred duty. And then, when Barbara's boy was ill, he did the same thing, and was quite angry because we would not have the child moved to our house. Barbara was talking about him only the other day. Then when Vania, the page boy, broke his bust of some sage or other, do you remember how, after scolding him, he went out of his way to atone for his anger, begged the boy's pardon, and bought him a ticket for the circus. He was a wonderful man. He insisted that the sort of life we led was not worth living, and begged my husband to give up our land to the peasants and to live by his own labour. Alexander only laughed. But the advice had been given quite earnestly, from a sense of duty.

"He had arrived at that conclusion, and he was right. Yet we went on living just as others did, and what was the result? I made a round of visits last year, to all my children except Peter. Well, what did I find? Were they happy? Still it was not possible to alter everything as he wanted. It was not for nothing that the first man fell and that sin came into the world."

That was our last talk. "I have done a great deal of thinking in my loneliness," she said; "indeed, I have done more than thinking; I have done some writing," and she smiled at me with an air of embarrassment that gave her aged face a sweet, wistful expression. "I have put down my thoughts about all these things, or rather, the outcome of my experiences. I kept a diary before I was married, and afterwards too, for a time. But I gave it up later, when it all began, about ten years ago." She did not say what had begun, but I knew that she meant the strained relations with her older children, the misunderstandings, and the contentions. She had had the entire control of the family estate after her husband's death. "In looking through my possessions here I found my old diaries and re-read them. There is a good deal in them that is silly, but there is a good deal that is good, and "— again the same smile —" instructive, too. I could not make up my mind at first whether to burn them or not, so I asked Father Nicodim, and he said, 'Burn them.' But that was all nonsense, you know. He could not understand. So I didn't burn them." How well I recognised her characteristic illogical consistency. She was obedient to Father Nicodim in most things, and had settled near the monastery to be under his guidance; but when she thought that his

judgment was irrational, she did what seemed best to her.

"Not only did I not burn them, I wrote two more volumes. There is nothing to do here, so I wrote what I thought about it all, and when I die — I don't mean to die yet: my mother lived to be seventy, and my father eighty — but when I do die these books are to be sent to you. You are to read them and to decide whether there is anything of real value in them, and if there is, you will let others share it. For no one seems to know. We go on suffering incessantly for our children, from before their birth until the time comes when they begin to insist on their rights. Think of the sleepless nights, the anxiety, the pain and the despair we go through. It would not matter if they really loved us, or even if they were happy. But they don't, and they aren't. I don't care what you say, there is something wrong somewhere. That is what I have written about. You will read it when I am dead. But I have said enough about it."

I promised, though I assured her that I did not expect to outlive her. We parted, and a month later I received the news of her death. Feeling faint at vespers, she had sat down on a little folding stool she carried with her, leaned her head against the wall, and died. It was some sort of

heart trouble. I went to the funeral. All the children were there except Helen, who was abroad, and Mitia — the one who had had scarlatina — who could not go because he was in the Caucasus undergoing a cure for a serious illness.

It was an ostentatious funeral, and its display inspired the monks with more respect for her than they had felt while she was alive. Her belongings were divided up rather as keepsakes than with a view to any intrinsic value. In momory of our friendship, I received her malachite paper-weight as well as six old leather-bound diaries and four new ordinary manuscript books in which, as she had said, she had written "about it all" while living near the monastery.

The book contains this remarkable woman's touching and instructive story.

As I knew her and her husband throughout their life together, and watched the growth and development of her children from the time of their birth to the time of their marriage, I have been able to fill in any omission in her memoirs from my own reminiscences whenever it has seemed necessary to make the story more clear.

THE MEMOIRS OF A MOTHER

THE MEMOIRS OF A MOTHER

It is the 3rd of May 1857, and I begin a new diary. My old one covers a long period, but I did not write it properly; there was too much introspection, too much sentimentality and nonsense — about being in love with Ivan Zakharovich — the desire to be famous, or to enter a convent. I have just read over a good deal that was nice, written when I was fifteen or sixteen. But now it is quite different. I am twenty, and I really am in love and in a state of ecstasy. I do not worry myself with fears as to whether it is real, or whether this is what true love should be, or whether my love is inadequate; on the contrary, I am afraid that this is the real thing, fate; that I love far, far too much, and cannot help loving, and I am afraid. There is something serious and dignified about him — his face, the sound of his voice, his cheery word — in spite of the fact that he is always bright and laughing, and can turn everything round so that it becomes graceful, clever, and humorous. Every one is amused, and so am I; yet there is something solemn about it.

Our eyes meet; they pierce deep, deep down into the other's, and go farther and farther. I am frightened, and I see that he is too.

But I will describe it all in order. He is the son of Anna Pavlovna Lutkovsky, and is related to the Obolenskys and the Mikashins; his eldest brother is the Lutkovsky who distinguished himself at the siege of Sevastopol, and he himself, Alexis,* is mine, yes mine! He was in Sevastopol, too, but only because he did not want to be safe at home when other men were dying there. He is above ambition. After the campaign he left the army, and did some sort of work in Petersburg; now he has come to our province, and is on the Committee. He is young, but he is liked and appreciated. Michel brought him to our house, and he became intimate with us at once. Mother took a fancy to him, and was very friendly. Father, as usual with all young men who wished to marry his daughters, received him coldly. He at once began to pay attention to Madia, the sort of attention men do pay to girls of sixteen; but in my innermost heart I knew at once that it was I, only I did not dare to own it even to myself. He used to come often; and from the first day, although nothing was said, I knew that it was all over — that it was he. Yes-

* "Peter" is the original.

terday, on leaving, he pressed my hand. We were on the landing of the staircase. I do not know why, but I felt that I was blushing. He looked at me, and he blushed also; and lost his head so completely that he turned round and ran downstairs, dropped his hat, picked it up, and stopped outside in the porch.

I went upstairs and looked out of the window. His carriage drove up, but he did not get in. I leaned out to look into the porch. He was standing there, stroking his beard into his mouth, and biting it. I was afraid he might turn round, and so I moved away from the window, and at the same moment I heard his step on the stairs. He was running up quickly, impetuously. How I knew I cannot say, but I went to the door and stood still, waiting. My heart ceased to beat; it seemed to stand still, and my breast heaved painfully, yet joyfully. Why I knew I cannot say. But I knew. He might very well have run upstairs and said, "I beg your pardon, I forgot my cigarettes," or something like that. That might very well have happened. What should I have done then? But no, that was impossible. What was to be — was. His face was solemn, timid, determined, and joyful. His eyes shone, his lips quivered. He had his overcoat on, and held his hat in his hand. We were alone — every one

was on the veranda, "Marie Alexandrovna," * he said, stopping on the last step, "it's best to have it over once for all than to go on in misery, and perhaps to upset you." I felt ill at ease, but painfully happy. Those dear eyes, that beautiful forehead, those trembling lips, so much more used to smiling, and the timidity of the strong energetic figure! I felt sobs rising to my throat. I expect he saw the expression on my face.

"Marie Alexandrovna,* you know what I want to tell you, don't you?"

"I don't know" . . . I began. "Yes, I do."

"Yes," he went on, "you know what I mean to ask you, and do not dare." He broke off, and then, suddenly, as though angry with himself: "Well, what is to be, will be. Can you love me as I love you; be my wife. Yes or no?"

I could not speak. Joy suffocated me. I held out my hand. He took it and kissed it. "Is it really yes? Truly? Yes? You knew, didn't you. I have suffered so long. I need not go away?"

"No, no."

I said that I loved him, and we kissed; and that first kiss seemed strange and unpleasant rather than pleasant, our lips just touching the other's face,

* "Barbara Nicolaevna" in the original.

as though by chance. He went down and sent away his carriage, and I ran off to mother. She went to father, who came out of his room. It was all over — we were engaged. It was past one when he left, and he will come again to-morrow, and the wedding will be in a month. He wanted it to be next week, but mother would not hear of it.

It was fifty-seven years ago. The war was just over. The Voronov household was busy with wedding preparations. The second daughter, Marie,* was engaged to Alexis Lutkovsky.† They had known each other since childhood.‡ They had played and danced together. Now he had returned from Sevastopol, with the rank of lieutenant.

At the very height of the war he had left the civil service to join a regiment as an ensign. On his return he could not make up his mind what to do. He felt nothing but contempt for military service, especially in the Guards, and did not want to go on with it in time of peace. But an uncle wanted him to be his aide-de-camp in Kiev. A cousin offered him a post at Constantinople. His

* "Barbara" in the original.

† "Evgraf Lotukhine" in the original.

‡ See p. 294 where she says, "Michel introduced him to our house," etc.

ex-chief asked him to go back to his former post. He had plenty of friends and relatives, and they were all fond of him. They were not quite fond enough of him to miss him when he was not there, but they were fond enough to say when he appeared (at least most of them), "Ah, Alexis! * how jolly!" He was never in any one's way, and most people liked to have him about, though for very different reasons. He could tell stories, and sing or play the guitar in first-rate fashion. But, above all, he never gave himself any airs. He was clever, good-looking, good-natured, and sympathetic. While he was looking round and discussing where and with whom he should work, and while he was thinking the matter over and weighing it very carefully, notwithstanding his seeming indifference, he met the Voronovs in Moscow. They invited him to their country-house, where he went and stayed a week; then left, and a week later returned and proposed.

He was accepted with great pleasure. It was a good match. He became engaged.

"There's nothing to be particularly pleased about," said old Voronov to his wife, who was standing near his desk looking at him wistfully.

"He is good-natured."

* "Grisha" in the original.

"Good-natured, indeed! That's not the point. But, as a matter of fact, he has lived: he has lived a good deal. I know the Lutkovsky* stock. What has he got except good intentions and his service? What we can give them will not provide for them."

"But they love one another, and they have been so frank about it," she said. She was so gentle and so mild.

"Yes, of course, he's all right. They're all alike, but I wanted some one better for Marie.† She is such an open-hearted, tender little soul, There was something else I had wished for. But it can't be helped. Come." And they left the room together.

Just at first father seemed displeased. No, not exactly displeased, but sad, not quite himself. I know him. Just as though he did not like him. I cannot understand it; I am not the only one. It is not because I am engaged to him, but nobility, truthfulness, and purity are so clearly written all over his being that one could not find more of them anywhere. It is evident that what is in his mind is on his tongue: he has nothing to hide. He only hides his own noble qualities. He will not, he cannot bear to speak of his Sevastopol ex-

*"Lotukhine" in the original.
†"Barbara" in the original.

ploits, nor about Michel. He blushed when I spoke of him. I thank Thee, Lord. I desire nothing, nothing more.

Lutkovsky * went to Moscow to make preparations for the wedding. He stopped at the chevalier, and there on the stairway he met Souschov. "Ah, Alexis,† is it true that you are going to get married?"

"Yes, it is true."

"I congratulate you. I know them. It is a charming family. I knew your bride too. She is beautiful. Let us have dinner together."

They dined together, and had first one bottle, then a second.

"Let's be off. Let's drive somewhere; there's nothing else to do."

They drove to the Hermitage, which had only just been opened. As they approached the theatre they met Anna. Anna did not know; but even if she had known he was going to be married, she would not have altered her manner, and would have smiled and shown her dimples with even more delight.

"Oh, there, how dull you are; come along!" She took his hand.

* "Lotukhine" in the original.
† "Grisha" in the original.

"Take care," said Souschov behind them. "Directly, directly."

Lutkovsky * walked as far as the theatre with her, and then handed her over to Basil, whom he happened to meet there.

"No, it is wrong. I will go home. Why did I come?"

Notwithstanding urgent requests to remain, he went home. In his hotel room he drank two glasses of seltzer water, and sat down at the table to make up his accounts. In the morning he had to go out on business — to borrow money. His brother had refused to lend him any, and so he had got it from a money-lender. He sat there making his calculations, and all the while his thoughts returned to Anna, and he felt annoyed that he had refused her, though he felt proud that he had done so.

He took out Marie's † photograph. She was a strong, well-developed, slender Russian beauty. He looked at the picture with admiration, then put it in front of him and went on with his work.

Suddenly in the corridor he heard the voices of Anna and Souschov. He was leading her straight to his door.

* "Lotukhine" in the original.
† "Barbara's" in the original.

"Alexis,* how could you?"

She entered his room.

Next morning Lutkovsky † went to breakfast with Souschov, who reproached him.

"You must know how terribly this would grieve her."

"Of course I do. Don't worry. I am as dumb as a fish. May I — Alexis ‡ has returned from Moscow, the same clear, child-like soul. I see he is unhappy because he is not rich, for my sake — only for my sake. Last night the conversation turned on children, on our future children. I cannot believe I shall have children, or even one child. It is impossible. I shall die of happiness. Oh, but if I had them, how could I love them and him? The two things do not go together. Well, what is to be will be."

A month later the wedding took place. In the autumn Lutkovsky § got a post in the Civil Service, and they went to St. Petersburg. In September they discovered that she was going to be a mother, and in March her first son was born.

The accouchement, as is usually the case, was unexpected, and confusion ensued just because

* "Grisha" in the original.
† "Lotukhine" in the original.
‡ "Grisha" in the original.
§ "Lotukhine" in the original.

every one had wanted to foresee everything, and things actually turned out quite different.

[*This is only a fragment, and contains some inconsistencies and some confusion in the names, which have been corrected.*—EDITOR.]

FATHER VASILY: A FRAGMENT

FATHER VASILY: A FRAGMENT

It was autumn. Before daybreak a cart rattled over the road, which was in bad repair, and drove up to Father Vasily's double-fronted thatched house. A peasant in a cap, with the collar of his kaftan turned up, jumped out of the cart, and, turning his horse round, knocked with his big whip at the window of the room which he knew to be that of the priest's cook.

"Who's there?"

"I want the priest."

"What for?"

"For some one who is sick."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Vozdrevo."

A man struck a light, and, coming out into the yard, opened the gate for the peasant.

The priest's wife — a short, stout woman, dressed in a quilted jacket, with a shawl over her head and felt boots on her feet — came out and began to speak in an angry, hoarse voice.

"What evil spirit has brought you here?"

"I have come for the priest."

"What are you servants thinking about? You haven't lit the fire yet."

"Is it time yet?"

"If it were not time I shouldn't say anything."

The peasant from Vozdrevo went to the kitchen, crossed himself before the ikon, and, making a low bow to the priest's wife, sat down on a bench near the door.

The peasant's wife had been suffering a long time; and, having given birth to a still-born child, was now at the point of death.

While gazing at what was going on in the hut he sat busily thinking how he should carry off the priest. Should he drive him across the Kossoe, as he had come, or should he go round another way? The road was bad near the village. The river was frozen over, but was not strong enough to bear. He had hardly been able to get across.

A labourer came in and threw down an armful of birch logs near the stove, asking the peasant to break up some of it to light the fire, whereupon the peasant took off his coat and set to work.

The priest awoke, as he always did, full of life and spirits. While still in bed, he crossed himself and said his favourite prayer, "To the King of Heaven," and repeated "Lord have mercy on us" several times. Getting up, he washed, brushed his long hair, put on his boots and an old cassock,

and then, standing before the ikons, began his morning prayers. When he reached the middle of the Lord's Prayer, and had come to the words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," he stopped, remembering the deacon who was drunk the day before, and who on meeting him muttered audibly, "Hypocrite, Pharisee." These words, Pharisee and hypocrite, pained Father Vasily particularly because, although conscious of having many faults, he did *not* believe hypocrisy to be one of them. He was angry with the deacon. "Yes, I forgive," he said to himself; "God be with him," and he continued his prayers. The words, "Lead us not into temptation," reminded him how he had felt when hot tea with rum had been handed to him the night before after vespers in the house of a rich landowner.

Having said his prayers he glanced at himself in a little mirror which distorted everything, and passed his hands over his smooth, fair hair, which grew in a circle round a moderately large bald patch, and then he looked with pleasure at his broad, kind face, with its thin beard, which looked young in spite of his forty-two years. After this he went into the sitting-room, where he found his wife hurriedly and with difficulty bringing in the samovar, which was on the point of boiling over.

"Why do you do that yourself? Where's Thekla?"

"Why do you do it yourself?" mocked his wife. "Who else is to do it?"

"But why so early?"

"A man from Vozdrevo has come to fetch you. His wife is dying."

"Has he been here long?"

"Yes, some time."

"Why was I not called before?"

Father Vasily drank his tea without milk (it was Friday); and then, taking the sacred elements, put on his fur coat and cap and went out into the porch with a resolute air. The peasant was awaiting for him there. "Good-morning, Mitri," said Father Vasily, and turning up his sleeve, made the sign of the cross, after which he stretched out his small strong hand with its short cut nails for him to kiss, and walked out on to the steps. The sun had risen, but was not yet visible behind the overhanging clouds. The peasant brought the cart out from the yard, and drove up to the front door. Father Vasily stepped quickly on the axle of the back wheel and sat down on the seat, which was bound round with hay. Mitri getting in beside him, whipped up the big-barrelled mare with its drooping ears, and the cart rattled over the frozen mud. A fine snow was falling.

II

Father Vasily's family consisted of his wife, her mother — (the widow of the former priest of the parish), and three children — two sons and a daughter. The eldest son had finished his course at the seminary, and was now preparing to enter the university; the second son — the mother's favourite, a boy of fifteen — was still at the seminary, and his sixteen-year-old daughter, Lena, lived at home, though discontented with her lot, doing little to help her mother. Father Vasily himself had studied at the seminary in his youth, and had done so brilliantly that, when he left in 1840, he was at the top of his class. He then began to prepare for entrance into the ecclesiastical academy, and even dreamt of a professorship, or of a bishopric. But his mother, the widow of a verger, with three daughters and an elder son who drank — lived in the greatest poverty. The step he took at that time gave a suggestion of self-sacrifice and renunciation to his whole life. To please his mother he left the academy, and became a village priest. He did this out of love for his mother though he never confessed it to himself, but ascribed his decision to indolence and dislike for intellectual pursuits. The place to which he was presented was a living

in a small village, and was offered to him on condition that he would marry the former priest's daughter.* The living was not a rich one, for the old priest had been poor and had left a widow and two daughters in distress. Anna, by whose aid he was to obtain the living, was a plain girl, but bright in every sense of the word. She literally fascinated Vasily and forced him to marry her, which he did. So he became Father Vasily, first wearing his hair short and afterwards long, and he lived happily with his wife, Anna Tikhonovna, for twenty-two years. Notwithstanding her romantic attachment to a student, the son of a former deacon, he was as kind to her as ever, as if he loved her still more tenderly, and wished to atone for the angry feelings which her attachment to the student had awakened in him.

It had afforded him an opportunity for the same self-sacrifice and self-denial; the result of which was that he gave up the academy, and felt a calm, almost unconscious, inner joy.

III

At first the two men drove on in silence. The road through the village was so uneven that al-

* The custom of giving a living to a son-in-law is universal in Russia. The living is usually the dowry of the youngest daughter.

though they moved slowly the cart was thrown from side to side, while the priest kept sliding off his seat, settling himself again and wrapping his cloak round him.

It was only after they had left the village behind, and crossed over the trench into the meadow that the priest spoke.

"Is your wife very bad?" he asked.

"We don't expect her to live," answered the peasant reluctantly.

"It is in God's, not man's hands. It is God's will," said the priest. "There is nothing for it but to submit."

The peasant raised his head and glanced at the priest's face. Apparently he was on the point of making an angry rejoinder, but the kind look which met his eyes disarmed him — so shaking his head he only said: "It may be God's will, but it is very hard on me, Father. I am alone. What will become of my little ones?"

"Don't be faint-hearted — God will protect them." The peasant did not reply, but swearing at the mare, who had changed from a trot into a slow walk, he pulled the rope reins sharply.

They entered a forest where the tracks were all equally bad, and drove along in silence for some time, trying to pick out the best of them. It was only after they had passed through the forest,

and were on the high road which led through fields bright with springing shoots of the autumn-sown corn, that the priest spoke again.

"There is promise of a good crop," he said.

"Not bad," answered the peasant, and was silent. All further attempts at conversation on the part of the priest were in vain.

They reached the patient's house about breakfast-time.

The woman, who was still alive, had ceased to suffer, but lay on her bed too weak to move, her expressive eyes alone showing that life was not yet extinct. She gazed at the priest with a look of entreaty, and kept her eyes fixed on him alone. An old woman stood near her, and the children were up on the stove. The eldest girl, a child of ten, dressed in a loose shirt, was standing, as if she were grown up, at a table near the bed, and resting her chin on her right hand, and supporting the right arm with her left, silently stared at her mother. The priest went to the bedside and administered the sacrament, and turning towards the ikon, began to pray. The old woman drew near to the dying woman, and looking at her shook her head and then covered her face with a piece of linen; after which she approached the priest, and put a coin into his hand. He knew

it was a five kopek * piece, and accepted it. At that moment the husband came into the hut.

"Is she dead?" he asked.

"She is dying," said the old woman.

On hearing this the girl burst into tears, muttering something. The three children on the stove began to howl in chorus.

The peasant crossed himself, and going up to his wife, uncovered her face and looked at her. The white face was calm and still. He stood over the dead woman for a few minutes, then tenderly covered the face again, and crossing himself several times, turned to the priest and said,—

"Shall we start?"

"Yes, we had better go."

"All right. I'll just water the mare." And he left the hut.

The old woman began a wailing chant about the orphans left motherless, with no one to feed or clothe them, comparing them to young birds who have fallen from their nest. At every verse of her chant she breathed heavily, and was more and more carried away by her own wailing. The priest listened, and became sad and sorry for the children and wanted to help them. He felt for his purse in the pocket of his cassock, remember-

* About three half-pence.

ing that he had a half-rouble (about a shilling) coin in it, which he had received from the landowner at whose house he had said vespers the evening before. He had not found time to hand it over to his wife, as he always did with his money; and, regardless of the consequences, he took out the coin, and showing it to the old woman, put it on the window-sill.

The peasant came in without his coat on and said that he had asked a friend to drive the priest back, as he had to go himself to fetch some boards for the coffin.

IV

Theodore, the friend who drove Father Vasily back, was a sociable, merry giant with red hair and a red beard. His son had just been taken as a recruit, and to celebrate the event, Theodore had had a drink, and was therefore in a particularly happy frame of mind.

"Mitri's mare was tired out," he said; "why not help a friend? Why not help a friend? We ought to be kind to one another, oughtn't we? Now then, my beauty!" he shouted to the bay horse with its tightly plaited tail, and touched it with the whip.

"Gently, gently," said Father Vasily, shaken as he was by the jolting.

"Well, we can go slower. Is she dead?"

"Yes, she is at rest," said the priest.

The red-haired man wanted to express his sympathy, but he also wanted to have a joke.

"God's taken one wife, He'll send another," he said, wishing to have a laugh.

"Oh, it is terribly sad for the poor fellow!" said the priest.

"Of course it is. He is poor and has no one to help him. He came to me and said, 'Take the priest home, will you; my mare can't do any more.' We must help one another, mustn't we?"

"You've been drinking, I see. It's wrong of you, Theodore. It's a working-day."

"Do you think I drank at the expense of others? I drank at my own. I was seeing my son off. Forgive me, Father, for God's sake."

"It is not my business to forgive. I only say it is better not to drink."

"Of course it is, but what am I to do? If I were just nobody — but, thank God, I am well off. I live openly. I am sorry for Mitri. Who could help being sorry for him? Why, only last year some one stole his horse. Oh, you have to keep a sharp eye on folk nowadays."

Theodore began a long story about some horses

that were stolen from a fair; how one was killed for the sake of its skin — but the thief was caught and was beaten black and blue, said Theodore, with evident satisfaction.

"They ought not to have beaten him."

"Do you think they ought to have patted him on the back?"

While conversing in this manner they reached Father Vasily's house.

Father Vasily wanted to go to his room and rest, but during his absence two letters had come — one from his son, one from the bishop. The bishop's circular was of no importance, but the son's letter gave rise to a stormy scene, which increased when his wife asked him for the half-rouble and found that he had given it away. Her anger grew, but the real cause was the boy's letter and their inability to satisfy his demands — due entirely to her husband's carelessness, she thought.

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THE END

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